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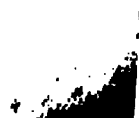
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Leo Tolstoy



FUMIGATED 12.18.78









**‘THE KINGDOM OF GOD
IS WITHIN YOU’**

Tolstoi, L.N.
//

‘THE KINGDOM OF GOD
IS WITHIN YOU’

CHRISTIANITY NOT AS A MYSTIC
RELIGION BUT AS A NEW
THEORY OF LIFE

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN OF
COUNT LEO TOLSTOY
BY
CONSTANCE GARNETT

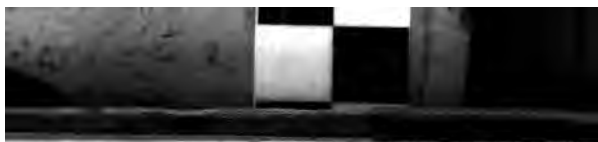
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"THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU"

CHAPTER VIII

DOCTRINE OF NON-RESISTANCE TO EVIL BY FORCE MUST INEVITABLY BE ACCEPTED BY MEN OF THE PRESENT DAY

Christianity is not a system of rules but a new conception of life, and therefore it was not obligatory and was not accepted in its true significance by all, but only by a few—Christianity is, moreover, prophetic of the destruction of the pagan life, and therefore of necessity of the acceptance of the Christian doctrines—Non-resistance to evil by force is one aspect of the Christian doctrine, which must inevitably in our times be accepted by men—Two methods of deciding every quarrel—First method is to find a universal definition of evil, which all must accept, and to resist this evil by force—Second method is the Christian one of complete non-resistance by force—Though the failure of the first method was recognised since the early days of Christianity, it was still proposed, and only as mankind has progressed it has become more and more evident that there cannot be any universal definition of evil—This is recognised by all at the present day, and if force is still used to resist evil, it is not because it is now regarded as right, but because people don't know how to avoid it—The difficulty of avoiding it is the result of the subtle and complex character of the government use of force—Force is used in four ways:

intimidation, bribery, hypnotism, and coercion by force of arms—State-violence can never be suppressed by the forcible overthrow of the government—Men are led by the sufferings of the pagan mode of life to the necessity of accepting Christ's teaching with its doctrine of non-resistance by force—The consciousness of its truth which is diffused throughout our society, will also bring about its acceptance—This consciousness is in complete contradiction with our life—This is specially obvious in compulsory military service, but through habit and the application of the four methods of violence by the State, men do not see this inconsistency of Christianity with the life of a soldier—They do not even see it, though the authorities themselves show all the immorality of a soldier's duties with perfect clearness—The call to military service is the supreme test for every man, when the choice is offered him between adopting the Christian doctrine of non-resistance, or slavishly submitting to the existing state organisation—Men usually renounce all they hold sacred, and submit to the demands of government, seeming to see no other course open to them—For men of the pagan conception of life there is no other course open, and never will be, in spite of the growing horrors of war—Society, made up of such men, must perish, and no social reorganisation can save it—Pagan life has reached its extreme limit, and will annihilate itself.

It is often said that if Christianity is a truth, it ought to have been accepted by everyone directly it appeared, and ought to have transformed men's lives for the better. But this is like saying that if the seed were ripe it ought at once to bring forth stalk, flower, and fruit.

The Christian religion is not a legal system which, being imposed by violence, may transform men's lives. Christianity is a new and higher conception of life. A new conception of life cannot be imposed on men; it

can only be freely assimilated. And it can only be freely assimilated in two ways: one spiritual and internal, the other experimental and external.

Some people—a minority—by a kind of prophetic instinct divine the truth of the doctrine, surrender themselves to it and adopt it. Others—the majority—only through a long course of mistakes, experiments, and suffering are brought to recognise the truth of the doctrine and the necessity of adopting it.

And by this experimental external method the majority of Christian men have now been brought to this necessity of assimilating the doctrine. One sometimes wonders what necessitated the corruption of Christianity which is now the greatest obstacle to its acceptance in its true significance.

If Christianity had been presented to men in its true, uncorrupted form, it would not have been accepted by the majority, who would have been as untouched by it as the nations of Asia are now. The peoples who accepted it in its corrupt form were subjected to its slow but certain influence, and by a long course of errors and experiments, and their resultant sufferings, have now been brought to the necessity of assimilating it in its true significance.

The corruption of Christianity and its acceptance in its corrupt form by the majority of men was as necessary as it is that the seed

should remain hidden for a certain time in the earth in order to germinate.

Christianity is at once a doctrine of truth and a prophecy. Eighteen centuries ago Christianity revealed to men the truth in which they ought to live, and at the same time foretold what human life would become if men would not live by it but continued to live by their previous principles, and what it would become if they accepted the Christian doctrine and carried it out in their lives.

Laying down in the Sermon on the Mount the principles by which to guide men's lives, Christ said : " Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock ; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house ; and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand ; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house ; and it fell : and great was the fall of it " (Matt. vii. 24-27).

And now after eighteen centuries the prophecy has been fulfilled. Not having followed Christ's teaching generally and its application to social life in non-resistance to

evil, men have been brought in spite of themselves to the inevitable destruction foretold by Christ for those who do not fulfil his teaching.

People often think the question of non-resistance to evil by force is a theoretical one, which can be neglected. Yet this question is presented by life itself to all men, and calls for some answer from every thinking man. Ever since Christianity has been outwardly professed, this question is for men in their social life like the question which presents itself to a traveller when the road, on which he has been journeying, divides into two branches. He must go on and he cannot say: "I will not think about it, but will go on just as I did before." There was one road, now there are two, and he must make his choice.

In the same way since Christ's teaching has been known by men they cannot say: "I will live as before and will not decide the question of resistance or non-resistance to evil by force." At every new struggle that arises one must inevitably decide: "Am I, or am I not, to resist by force what I regard as evil?"

The question of resistance or non-resistance to evil arose when the first conflict between men took place, since every conflict is nothing else than resistance by force to what each of the combatants regards as evil.

But before Christ, men did not see that resistance by force to what each regards as evil, simply because one thinks evil what the other thinks good, is only one of the methods of settling the dispute, and that there is another method—that of not resisting evil by force at all.

Before Christ's teaching, it seemed to men that the one only means of settling a dispute was by resistance to evil by force. And they acted accordingly, each of the combatants trying to convince himself and others that what each respectively regards as evil is actually, absolutely evil.

And to do this from the earliest time men have devised definitions of evil and tried to make them binding on everyone. And such definitions of evil sometimes took the form of laws, supposed to have been received by supernatural means, sometimes of the commands of rulers or assemblies to whom infallibility was attributed. Men resorted to violence against others and convinced themselves and others that they were directing their violence against evil recognised as such by all.

This means was employed from the earliest times, especially by those who had gained possession of authority, and for a long while its irrationality was not detected.

But the longer men lived in the world and the more complex their relations became, the

more evident it was that to resist by force what each regarded as evil was irrational, that conflict was in no way lessened thereby, and that no human definitions can succeed in making what some regard as evil be accepted as such by others.

Already at the time Christianity arose it was evident to a great number of people in the Roman Empire where it arose that what was regarded as evil by Nero and Caligula could not be regarded as evil by others. Even at that time men had begun to understand that human laws, though given out for divine laws, were compiled by men, and cannot be infallible, whatever the external majesty with which they are invested, and that erring men are not rendered infallible by assembling together and calling themselves a senate or any other name. Even at that time this was felt and understood by many. And it was then that Christ preached his doctrine, which consisted not only of the prohibition of resistance to evil by force, but gave a new conception of life and a means of putting an end to conflict between all men, not by making it the duty of one section only of mankind to submit without conflict to what is prescribed to them by certain authorities, but by making it the duty of all—and consequently of those in authority—not to resort to force against anyone in any circumstances.

This doctrine was accepted at the time by only a very small number of disciples. The majority of men, especially all who were in power even after the nominal acceptance of Christianity, continued to maintain for themselves the principle of resistance by force to what they regarded as evil. So it was under the Roman and Byzantine emperors, and so it continued to be later.

The insufficiency of the principle of the authoritative definition of evil and resistance to it by force, evident as it was in the early ages of Christianity, becomes still more obvious through the division of the Roman Empire into many states of equal authority, through their hostilities and the internal conflicts that broke out within them.

But men were not ready to accept the solution given by Christ, and the old definitions of evil, which ought to be resisted, continued to be laid down by means of making laws binding on all and enforced by forcible means. The authority that decided what ought to be regarded as evil and resisted by force was at one time the pope, at another an emperor or king, an elective assembly or a whole nation. But both within and without the state there were always men to be found who did not accept as binding on themselves the laws given out as the decrees of a god, or made by men invested with a sacred character, or the institutions supposed to

represent the will of the nation; and there were men who thought good what the existing authorities regarded as bad, and who struggled against the authorities with the same violence as was employed against them.

The men invested with religious authority regarded as evil what the men and institutions, invested with temporal authority, regarded as good and *vice versâ*, and the struggle grew more and more intense. And the longer men used violence as the means of settling their disputes, the more obvious it became that it was an unsuitable means, since there could be no external authority able to define evil recognised by all.

Things went on like this for eighteen centuries and at last reached the present position in which it is absolutely obvious that there is, and can be, no external definition of evil binding upon all. Men have come to the point of ceasing to believe in the possibility or even desirability of finding and establishing such a general definition. It has come to men in power ceasing to attempt to prove that what they regard as evil is evil, and simply declaring that they regard as evil what they don't like, while their subjects no longer obey them because they accept the definition of evil laid down by them, but simply obey because they cannot help themselves. It was not because it was a good

thing, necessary and beneficial to men, and the contrary course would have been an evil, but simply because it was the will of those in power that Nice was incorporated into France, and Lorraine into Germany, and Bohemia into Austria, and that Poland was divided, and Ireland and India ruled by the English government, and that the Chinese are attacked and the Africans slaughtered, and the Chinese prevented from immigrating by the Americans, and the Jews persecuted by the Russians, and that landowners appropriate lands they do not cultivate and capitalists enjoy the fruits of the labour of others. It has come to the present state of things; one set of men commit acts of violence no longer on the pretext of resistance to evil, but simply for their profit or their caprice, and another set submit to violence, not because they suppose, as was supposed in former times, that this violence was practised upon them for the sake of securing them from evil, but simply because they cannot avoid it.

If the Roman, or the man of mediæval times, or the average Russian of fifty years ago as I remember him, was convinced without a shade of doubt that the violence of authority was indispensable to preserve him from evil; that taxes, dues, serfage, prisons, scourging, knouts, executions, the army and war were what ought to be,—we know now that one can seldom find a man who believes

that all these means of violence preserve anyone from any evil whatever, and indeed does not clearly perceive that most of these acts of violence to which he is exposed, and in which he has some share, are in themselves a great and useless evil.

There is no one to-day who does not see the uselessness and injustice of collecting taxes from the toiling masses to enrich idle officials; or the senselessness of inflicting punishments on weak or depraved persons in the shape of transportation from one place to another, or of imprisonment in a fortress where, living in security and indolence, they only become weaker and more depraved; or the worse than uselessness and injustice, the positive insanity and barbarity of preparations for war and of wars, causing devastation and ruin, and having no kind of justification. Yet these forms of violence continue and are supported by the very people who see their uselessness, injustice and cruelty, and suffer from them. If fifty years ago the idle rich man and the illiterate labourer were both alike convinced that their state of everlasting holiday for one and everlasting toil for the other was ordained by God himself, we know very well that nowadays, thanks to the growth of population and the diffusion of books and education, it would be hard to find in Europe, or even in Russia, either among rich or poor, a man to whom in

one shape or another a doubt as to the justice of this state of things had never presented itself. The rich know that they are guilty in the very fact of being rich, and try to expiate their guilt by sacrifices to art and science, as of old they expiated their sins by sacrifices to the Church. And even the larger half of the working people openly declare that the existing order is iniquitous and bound to be destroyed or reformed. One set of religious people of whom there are millions in Russia, the so-called sectaries, consider the existing social order as unjust and to be destroyed on the ground of the Gospel teaching taken in its true sense. Others regard it as unjust on the ground of the socialistic, communistic, or anarchistic theories, which are springing up in the lower strata of the working people. Violence no longer rests on the belief in its utility, but only on the fact of its having existed so long, and being organised by the ruling classes who profit by it, so that those who are under their authority cannot extricate themselves from it. The governments of our day—all of them, the most despotic and the liberal alike—have become what Herzen so well called “Ghengis Khan with the telegraph :” that is to say, organisations of violence based on no principle but the grossest tyranny, and at the same time taking advantage of all the means invented by science for the peaceful

collective social activity of free and equal men, used by them to enslave and oppress their fellows.

Governments and the ruling classes no longer take their stand on right or even on the semblance of justice, but on a skilful organisation carried to such a point of perfection by the aid of science that every one is caught in the circle of violence and has no chance of escaping from it. This circle is made up now of four methods of working upon men, joined together like the links of a chain ring.

The first and oldest method is intimidation. This consists in representing the existing state organisation (whatever it may be—free republic or the most savage despotism) as something sacred and immutable, and therefore following any efforts to alter it with the cruellest punishments. This method is in use now—as it has been from olden times—wherever there is a government: in Russia against the so-called Nihilists, in America against Anarchists, in France against Imperialists, Legitimists, Communards, and Anarchists.

Railways, telegraphs, telephones, photographs, and the great perfection of the means of getting rid of men for years without killing them, by solitary confinement, where, hidden from the world, they perish and are forgotten, and the many other modern inventions employed by government, give such power

that when once authority has come into certain hands, the police, open and secret, the administration and prosecutors, gaolers and executioners of all kinds, do their work so zealously that there is no chance of overturning the government, however cruel and senseless it may be.

The second method is corruption. It consists in plundering the industrious working people of their wealth by means of taxes and distributing it in satisfying the greed of officials, who are bound in return to support and keep up the oppression of the people. These bought officials, from the highest ministers to the poorest copying clerks, make up an unbroken network of men bound together by the same interest—that of living at the expense of the people. They become the richer the more submissively they carry out the will of the government; and at all times and places, sticking at nothing, in all departments support by word and deed the violence of government on which their own prosperity also rests.

The third method is what I can only describe as hypnotising the people. This consists in checking the moral development of men, and by various suggestions keeping them back in the ideal of life, outgrown by mankind at large, on which the power of government rests. This hypnotising process is organised at the present in the most

complex manner, and starting from their earliest childhood continues to act on men till the day of their death. It begins in their earliest years in the compulsory schools, created for this purpose, in which the children have instilled into them the ideas of life of their ancestors, which are in direct antagonism with the conscience of the modern world. In countries where there is a state religion, they teach the children the senseless blasphemies of the church catechisms, together with the duty of obedience to their superiors. In republican states they teach them the savage superstition of patriotism and the same pretended obedience to the governing authorities.

The process is kept up during later years by the encouragement of the religious and patriotic superstitions.

The religious superstition is encouraged by establishing, with money taken from the people, temples, processions, memorials, and festivals, which, aided by painting, architecture, music, and incense, intoxicate the people, and above all by the support of the clergy, whose duty consists in brutalising the people and keeping them in a permanent state of stupefaction by their teaching, the solemnity of their services, their sermons, and their interference in private life—at births, deaths, and marriages. The patriotic superstition is encouraged by

the creation, with money taken from the people, of national fêtes, spectacles, monuments, and festivals to dispose men to attach importance to their own nation, and to the aggrandisement of the state and its rulers, and to feel antagonism and even hatred for other nations. With these objects under despotic governments there is direct prohibition against printing and disseminating books to enlighten the people, and everyone who might rouse the people from their lethargy is exiled or imprisoned. Moreover under every government without exception everything is kept back that might emancipate and everything encouraged that tends to corrupt the people, such as literary works tending to keep them in the barbarism of religious and patriotic superstition, all kinds of sensual amusements, spectacles, circuses, theatres, and even the physical means of inducing stupefaction, as tobacco and alcohol, which form the principal source of revenue of states. Even prostitution is encouraged and not only recognised but even organised by the government in the majority of states. So much for the third method.

The fourth method consists in selecting from all the men who have been stupefied and enslaved by the three former methods a certain number, exposing them to special and intensified means of stupefaction and brutalisation and so making them into a passive

instrument for carrying out all the cruelties and brutalities needed by the government. This result is attained by taking them at that youthful age when men have not had time to form clear and definite principles of morals, and removing them from all natural and human conditions of life, home, family and kindred, and useful labour. They are shut up together in barracks, dressed in special clothes, and worked upon by cries, drums, music, and shining objects to go through certain daily actions invented for this purpose, and by this means are brought into an hypnotic condition in which they cease to be men and become mere senseless machines, submissive to the hypnotiser. These physically vigorous young men (in these days of universal conscription all young men) hypnotised, armed with murderous weapons, always obedient to the governing authorities and ready for any act of violence at their command, constitute the fourth and principal method of enslaving men.

By this method the circle of violence is completed.

Intimidation, corruption, and hypnotising bring people into a condition in which they are willing to be soldiers; the soldiers give the power of punishing and plundering them (and purchasing officials with the spoils), and hypnotising them and converting them in time into these same soldiers again.

The circle is complete, and there is no chance of breaking through it by force.

Some persons maintain that freedom from violence, or at least a great diminution of it, may be gained by the oppressed forcibly overturning the oppressive government and replacing it by a new one under which such violence and oppression will be unnecessary ; but they deceive themselves and others, and their efforts do not better the position of the oppressed but only make it worse. Their conduct only tends to increase the despotism of government. Their efforts only afford a plausible pretext for government to strengthen their power.

Even if we admit that under a combination of circumstances specially unfavourable for the government, as in France in 1870, any government might be forcibly overturned and the power transferred to other hands, the new authority would rarely be less oppressive than the old one ; on the contrary, always having to defend itself against its dispossessed and exasperated enemies, it would be more despotic and cruel, as has always been the rule in all revolutions.

While socialists and communists regard the individualistic, capitalistic organisation of society as an evil, and the anarchists regard as an evil all government whatever, there are royalists, conservatives, and capitalists who consider any socialistic or communistic

organisation or anarchy as an evil, and all these parties have no means other than violence to bring men to agreement. Whichever of these parties were successful in bringing their schemes to pass, must resort to support its authority to all the existing methods of violence and even invent new ones.

The oppressed would be another set of people, and coercion would take some new form; but the violence and oppression would be unchanged or even more cruel, since hatred would be intensified by the struggle, and new forms of oppression would have been devised. So it has always been after all revolutions and all attempts at revolution, all conspiracies, and all violent changes of government. Every conflict only strengthens the means of oppression in the hands of those who happen at a given moment to be in power.

The position of our Christian society, and especially the ideals most current in it, prove this in a strikingly convincing way.

There remains now only one sphere of human life not encroached upon by government authority—that is the domestic, economic sphere, the sphere of private life and labour. And even this is now—thanks to the efforts of communists and socialists—being gradually encroached upon by government, so that labour and recreation, dwellings, dress, and food will gradually, if the hopes of the

reformers are successful, be prescribed and regulated by government.

The slow progress of eighteen centuries has brought the Christian nations again to the necessity of deciding the question they have evaded—the question of the acceptance or non-acceptance of Christ's teaching, and the question following upon it in social life of resistance or non-resistance to evil by force. But there is this difference: that whereas formerly men could accept or refuse to accept the solution given by Christ, now that solution cannot be avoided, since it alone can save men from the slavery in which they are caught like a net.

But it is not only the misery of the position which makes this inevitable.

While the pagan organisation has been proved more and more false, the truth of the Christian religion has been growing more and more evident.

Not in vain have the best men of Christian humanity, who apprehended the truth by spiritual intuition, for eighteen centuries testified to it in spite of every menace, every privation, and every suffering. By their martyrdom they passed on the truth to the masses, and impressed it on their hearts.

Christianity has penetrated into the consciousness of humanity, not only negatively by the demonstration of the impossibility of

continuing in the pagan life, but also through its simplification, its increased clearness and freedom from the superstitions intermingled with it, and its diffusion through all classes of the population.

Eighteen centuries of Christianity have not passed without an effect even on those who accepted it only externally. These eighteen centuries have brought men so far that even while they continue to live the pagan life which is no longer consistent with the development of humanity, they not only see clearly all the wretchedness of their position, but in the depths of their souls they believe (they can only live through this belief) that the only salvation from this position is to be found in fulfilling the Christian doctrine in its true significance. As to the time and manner of salvation, opinions are divided according to the intellectual development and the prejudices of each society. But every man of the modern world recognises that our salvation lies in fulfilling the law of Christ. Some believers in the supernatural character of Christianity hold that salvation will come when all men are brought to believe in Christ, whose second coming is at hand. Other believers in supernatural Christianity hold that salvation will come through the Church, which will draw all men into its fold, train them in the Christian

virtues, and transform their life. A third section, who do not admit the divinity of Christ, hold that the salvation of mankind will be brought about by slow and gradual progress, through which the pagan principles of our existence will be replaced by the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity—that is, by Christian principles. A fourth section, who believe in the social revolution, hold that salvation will come when through a violent revolution men are forced into community of property, abolition of government, and collective, instead of individual, industry—that is to say, the realisation of one side of the Christian doctrine. In one way or another all men of our day in their inner consciousness condemn the existing effete pagan order, and admit, often unconsciously and while regarding themselves as hostile to Christianity, that our salvation is only to be found in the application of the Christian doctrine, or parts of it, in its true significance to our daily life.

Christianity cannot, as its Founder said, be realised by the majority of men all at once; it must grow like a huge tree from a tiny seed. And so it has grown, and now has reached its full development, not yet in actual life, but in the conscience of men of to-day.

Now not only the minority, who have

always comprehended Christianity by spiritual intuition, but all the vast majority who seem so far from it in their social existence recognise its true significance.

Look at individual men in their private life, listen to their standards of conduct in their judgment of one another ; hear not only their public utterances, but the counsels given by parents and guardians to the young in their charge ; and you will see that, far as their social life, based on violence, may be from realising Christian truth, in their private life, what is considered good by all without exception is nothing but the Christian virtues, what is considered as bad is nothing but the antichristian vices. Those who consecrate their lives self-sacrificingly to the service of humanity are regarded as the best men. The selfish, who make use of the misfortunes of others for their own advantage, are regarded as the worst of men.

Though some non-Christian ideals, such as strength, courage and wealth, are still worshipped by a few who have not been penetrated by the Christian spirit, these ideals are out of date and are abandoned, if not by all, at least by all those regarded as the best people. There are no ideals, other than the Christian ideals, which are accepted by all and regarded as binding on all.

The position of our Christian humanity, if you look at it from the outside, with all its cruelty and degradation of men, is terrible indeed. But if one looks at it within, in its inner consciousness, the spectacle it presents is absolutely different.

All the evil of our life seems to exist only because it has been so for so long; those who do the evil have not had time yet to learn how to act otherwise, though they do not want to act as they do.

All the evil seems to exist through some cause independent of the conscience of men.

Strange and contradictory as it seems, all men of the present day hate the very social order they are themselves supporting.

I think it is Max Müller who describes the amazement of an Indian convert to Christianity who, after absorbing the essence of the Christian doctrine, came to Europe and saw the actual life of Christians. He could not recover from his astonishment at the complete contrast between the reality and what he had expected to find among Christian nations. If we feel no astonishment at the contrast between our convictions and our conduct, that is because the influences, tending to obscure the contrast, produce an effect upon us too. We need only look at our life from the point of view of that

Indian, who understood Christianity in its true significance, without any compromises or concessions, we need but look at the savage brutalities of which our life is full, to be appalled at the contradictions in the midst of which we live often without observing them.

We need only recall the preparations for war, the mitrailleuses, the silver-gilt bullets, the torpedoes and—the Red Cross ; the solitary prison-cells, the experiments of execution by electricity—and the care of the hygienic welfare of prisoners ; the philanthropy of the rich, and—their life, which produces the poor they are benefiting.

And these inconsistencies are not, as it might seem, because men pretend to be Christians while they are really pagans, but because of something lacking in men, or some kind of force hindering them from being what they already feel themselves to be in their consciousness, and what they genuinely wish to be. Men of the present day do not merely pretend to hate oppression, inequality, class distinction, and every kind of cruelty to animals as well as human beings. They genuinely detest all this, but they do not know how to put a stop to it, or perhaps cannot decide to give up what preserves it all, and seems to them necessary.

Indeed, ask every man separately whether he thinks it laudable and worthy of a man of this age to hold a position from which he receives a salary disproportionate to his work ; to take from the people—often in poverty—taxes to be spent on constructing cannon, torpedoes, and other instruments of butchery, so as to make war on people with whom we wish to be at peace, and who feel the same wish in regard to us ; or to receive a salary for devoting one's whole life to constructing these instruments of butchery, or to preparing oneself and others for the work of murder. And ask him whether it is laudable and worthy of a man, and suitable for a Christian, to employ himself, for a salary, in seizing wretched, misguided, often illiterate and drunken, creatures because they appropriate the property of others—on a much smaller scale than we do—or because they kill men in a different fashion from that in which we undertake to do it—and shutting them in prison for it, ill-treating them, and killing them ? And whether it is laudable and worthy of a man and a Christian to preach for a salary to the people, not Christianity, but superstitions which one knows to be stupid and pernicious. And whether it is laudable and worthy of a man to rob his neighbour for his gratification, of what he wants to satisfy his simplest needs, as the

great landowners do? Or to force him to exhausting labour beyond his strength, to augment one's wealth, as do factory owners and manufacturers? Or to profit by the poverty of men to increase one's gains, as merchants do? And every one taken separately, especially if one's remarks are directed at some one else, not himself, will answer "No!" And yet the very man who sees all the baseness of those actions, of his own free will, uncoerced by any one, often even for no pecuniary profit, but only from childish vanity, for a china cross, a scrap of ribbon, a bit of fringe he is allowed to wear, will enter military service, become a magistrate or justice of the peace, commissioner, archbishop or beadle, though in fulfilling these offices he must commit acts the baseness and shamefulness of which he cannot fail to recognise.

I know that many of these men will confidently try to prove that they have reasons for regarding their position as legitimate and quite indispensable. They will say in their defence that authority is given by God, that the functions of the state are indispensable for the welfare of humanity, that property is not opposed to Christianity; that the rich young man was only commanded to sell all he had and give to the poor if he wished to be perfect; that the existing distribution of

property and our commercial system must always remain as they are, and are to the advantage of all, and so on. But, however much they try to deceive themselves and others, they all know that what they are doing is opposed to all the beliefs which they profess, and in the depths of their souls, when they are left alone with their conscience, they are ashamed and miserable at the recollection of it, especially if the baseness of their action has been pointed out to them. A man of the present day, whether he believes in the divinity of Christ or not, cannot fail to see that to assist in the capacity of Tsar, minister, governor or commissioner, in taking from a poor family its last cow for taxes to be spent on cannons, or on the pay and pensions of idle officials, who live in luxury and are worse than useless; or in putting into prison some man we have ourselves corrupted, and throwing his family on the streets; or in plundering and butchering in war; or in inculcating savage and idolatrous superstitions in the place of the law of Christ; or in impounding the cow found on one's land though it belongs to a man who has no land; or to cheat the workman in a factory by imposing fines for accidentally spoiled articles; or making a poor man pay double the value for anything simply because he is in the direst poverty;—not a man of the present day can fail to know

that all these actions are base and disgraceful, and that they need not do them. They all know it. They know that what they are doing is wrong, and would not do it for anything in the world if they had the power of resisting the forces which shut their eyes to the criminality of their actions and impel them to commit them.

In nothing is the pitch of inconsistency modern life has attained to so evident as in universal conscription, which is the last resource and the final expression of violence.

Indeed, it is only because this state of universal armament has been brought about gradually and imperceptibly, and because governments have exerted, in maintaining it, every resource of intimidation, corruption, brutalisation and violence, that we do not see its flagrant inconsistency with the Christian ideas and sentiments by which the modern world is permeated.

We are so accustomed to the inconsistency that we do not see all the hideous folly and immorality of men voluntarily choosing the profession of butchery as though it were an honourable career, of poor wretches submitting to conscription, or in countries where compulsory service has not been introduced, of people voluntarily abandoning a life of industry to recruit soldiers and train them as

murderers. We know that all of these men are either Christians, or profess humane and liberal principles, and they know that they thus become partly responsible—through universal conscription, personally responsible—for the most insane, aimless and brutal murders. And yet they all do it.

More than that, in Germany, where compulsory service first originated, Caprivi has given expression to what had been hitherto so assiduously concealed—that is, that the men that the soldiers will have to kill are not foreigners alone, but their own countrymen, the very working people from whom they themselves are taken. And this admission has not opened people's eyes, has not horrified them! They still go like sheep to the slaughter, and submit to everything required of them.

And that is not all: the Emperor of Germany has lately shown still more clearly the duties of the army, by thanking and rewarding a soldier for killing a defenceless citizen who made his approach incautiously. By rewarding an action always regarded as base and cowardly even by men on the lowest level of morality, William has shown that a soldier's chief duty—the one most appreciated by the authorities—is that of executioner; and not a professional executioner who kills only condemned criminals, but one

ready to butcher any innocent man at the word of command.

And even that is not all. In 1892, the same William, the *enfant terrible* of state authority, who says plainly what other people only think, in addressing some soldiers gave public utterance to the following speech, which was reported next day in thousands of newspapers :—"Conscripts !" he said, "you have sworn fidelity to *me* before the altar and the minister of God ! You are still too young to understand all the importance of what has been said here ; let your care before all things be to obey the orders and instructions given you. You have sworn fidelity to *me*, lads of my guard ; *that means that you are now my soldiers, that you have given yourselves to me body and soul.* For you there is now but one enemy, *my enemy.* *In these days of Socialistic sedition it may come to pass that I command you to fire on your own kindred, your brothers, even your own fathers and mothers—which God forbid !—* even then you are bound to obey my orders without hesitation."

This man expresses what all sensible rulers think, but studiously conceal. He says openly that the soldiers are in *his* service, at *his* disposal, and must be ready for *his* advantage to murder even their brothers and fathers.

In the most brutal words he frankly exposes all the horror and criminality for which men prepare themselves in entering the army, and the depths of ignominy to which they fall in promising obedience. Like a bold hypnotiser, he tests the degree of insensibility of the hypnotised subject. He touches his skin with a red-hot iron ; the skin smokes and scorches, but the sleeper does not awake.

This miserable man, imbecile and drunk with power, outrages in this utterance everything that can be sacred for a man of the modern world. And yet all the Christians, liberals, and cultivated people, far from resenting this outrage, did not even observe it.

The last, the most extreme test is put before men in its coarsest form. And they do not seem even to notice that it is a test, that there is any choice about it. They seem to think there is no course open but slavish submission. One would have thought these insane words, which outrage everything a man of the present day holds sacred, must rouse indignation. But there has been nothing of the kind.

All the young men through the whole of Europe are exposed year after year to this test, and, with very few exceptions, they all renounce all that a man can hold sacred, all

express their readiness to kill their brothers, even their fathers, at the bidding of the first crazy creature, dressed up in a livery with red and gold trimming, and only wait to be told where and when they are to kill. And they actually are ready.

Every savage has something he holds sacred, something for which he is ready to suffer, something he will not consent to do. But what is it that is sacred to the civilised man of to-day? They say to him: "You must become my slave, and this slavery may force you to kill even your own father;" and he, often very well educated, trained in all the sciences at the university, quietly puts his head under the yoke. They dress him up in a clown's costume, and order him to cut capers, turn and twist and bow, and kill—he does it all submissively. And when they let him go, he seems to shake himself and go back to his former life, and he continues to discourse upon the dignity of man, liberty, equality and fraternity as before.

"Yes, but what is one to do?" people often ask in genuine perplexity; "if every one would stand out it would be something, but by myself I shall only suffer without doing any good to any one."

And that is true. A man with the social conception of life cannot resist. The aim of his life is his personal welfare. It is better

for his personal welfare for him to submit, and he submits.

Whatever they do to him, however they torture or humiliate him, he will submit, for, alone, he can do nothing; he has no principle for the sake of which he could resist violence alone. And those who control them never allow them to unite together. It is often said that the invention of terrible weapons of destruction will put an end to war. That is an error. As the means of extermination are improved, the means of reducing men who hold the state conception of life to submission can be improved to correspond. They may slaughter them by thousands, by millions, they may tear them to pieces, still they will march to war like senseless cattle. Some will want beating to make them move, others will be proud to go if they are allowed to wear a scrap of ribbon or gold lace.

And of this mass of men so brutalised as to be ready to promise to kill their own parents, the social reformers—conservatives, liberals, socialists, and anarchists—propose to form a rational and moral society. What sort of moral and rational society can be formed out of such elements? With warped and rotten planks you cannot build a house, however you put them together. And to form a rational moral society of such men is

just as impossible a task. They can be formed into nothing but a herd of cattle, driven by the shouts and whips of the herds-men. As indeed they are.

So, then, we have on one side men calling themselves Christians, and professing the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, and along with that ready—in the name of liberty—to submit to the most slavish degradation—in the name of equality—to accept the crudest, most senseless division of men by externals merely into higher and lower classes, allies and enemies, and—in the name of fraternity—ready to murder their brothers.*

The contradiction between life and conscience and the misery resulting from it have reached the extreme limit and can go no further. The state organisation of life based on violence, the aim of which was the security of personal, family and social welfare, has come to the point of renouncing the very objects for which it was founded—it has reduced men to absolute renunciation and loss of the welfare it was to secure.

* The fact that among certain nations, as the English and the American, military service is not compulsory (though already one hears there are some who advocate that it should be made so) does not affect the servility of the citizens to the government in principle. Here we have each to go and kill or be killed, there they have each to give the fruit of their toil to pay for the recruiting and training of soldiers.

The first half of the prophecy has been fulfilled in the generation of men who have not accepted Christ's teaching. Their descendants have been brought now to the absolute necessity of putting the truth of the second half to the test of experience.

CHAPTER IX

THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF LIFE WILL EMANCIPATE MEN FROM THE MISERIES OF OUR PAGAN LIFE

The external life of Christian peoples remains pagan though they are penetrated by Christian consciousness—The way out of this contradiction is by the acceptance of the Christian theory of life—Only through Christianity is every man free, and emancipated of all human authority—This emancipation can be effected by no change in external conditions of life, but only by a change in the conception of life—The Christian ideal of life requires renunciation of all violence, and in emancipating the man who accepts it, emancipates the whole world from all external authorities—The way out of the present apparently hopeless position is for every man who is capable of assimilating the Christian conception of life, to accept it and live in accordance with it—But men consider this way too slow and look for deliverance through changes in material conditions of life aided by government—That will lead to no improvement, as it is simply increasing the evil under which men are suffering—A striking instance of this is the submission to compulsory military service, which it would be more advantageous for every man to refuse than to submit to—The emancipation of men can only be brought about by each individual emancipating himself, and the examples of this self-emancipation which are already appearing threaten the destruction of governmental authority—Refusal to comply with the unchristian demands of government undermines the authority of the state and emancipates men—And therefore cases of such non-compliance are regarded with more dread by state authorities than any conspiracies or acts of violence—

Examples of non-compliance in Russia, in regard to oath of allegiance, payment of taxes, passports, police duties, and military service—Examples of such non-compliance in other states—Governments do not know how to treat men who refuse to comply with their demands on Christian grounds—Such people, without striking a blow, undermine the very basis of government from within—To punish them is equivalent to openly renouncing Christianity, and assisting in diffusing the very principle by which these men justify their non-compliance—So governments are in a helpless position—Men who maintain the uselessness of personal independence, only retard the dissolution of the present state organisation based on force.

THE position of the Christian peoples in our days has remained just as cruel as it was in the times of paganism. In many respects, especially in the oppression of the masses, it has become **even** more cruel than it was in the days of paganism.

But between the condition of men in ancient times and their condition in our days there is just the difference that we see in the world of vegetation between the last days of autumn and the first days of spring. In the autumn the external lifelessness in nature corresponds with its inward condition of death, while in the spring the external lifelessness is in sharp contrast with the internal state of reviving and passing into new forms of life.

In the same way the similarity between the ancient heathen life and the life of to-day is merely external; the inward condition of men in the times of heathenism was absolutely

different from their inward condition at the present time.

Then the outward condition of cruelty and of slavery was in complete harmony with the inner conscience of men, and every step in advance intensified this harmony; now the outward condition of cruelty and of slavery is completely contradictory to the Christian consciousness of men, and every step in advance only intensifies this contradiction.

Humanity is passing through seemingly unnecessary, fruitless agonies. It is passing through something like the throes of birth. Everything is ready for the new life, but still the new life does not come.

There seems no way out of the position. And there would be none, except that a man (and thereby all men) is gifted with the power of forming a different, higher theory of life, which at once frees him from all the bonds by which he seems indissolubly fettered.

And such a theory is the Christian view of life made known to mankind 1800 years ago.

A man need only make this theory of life his own, for the fetters, which seemed so indissolubly forged upon him, to drop off of themselves, and for him to feel himself absolutely free, just as a bird would feel itself free in a fenced-in place directly it took to its wings.

People talk about the liberty of the Christian Church, about giving or not giving freedom to Christians. Underlying all these ideas and expressions there is some strange misconception. Freedom cannot be bestowed on or taken from a Christian or Christians. Freedom is an inalienable possession of the Christian.

If we talk of bestowing freedom on Christians or withholding it from them, we are obviously talking not of real Christians but of people who only call themselves Christians. A Christian cannot fail to be free, because the attainment of the aim he sets before himself cannot be prevented or even hindered by any one or anything.

Let a man only understand his life as Christianity teaches him to understand it, let him understand, that is, that his life belongs not to him—not to his own individuality, nor to his family, nor to the state—but to Him Who has sent him into the world, and let him once understand that he must therefore fulfil, not the law of his own individuality, nor his family, nor of the state, but the infinite law of Him from Whom he has come; and he will not only feel himself absolutely free from every human power, but will even cease to regard such power as at all able to hamper any one.

Let a man but realise that the aim of his life is the fulfilment of God's law, and that

law will replace all other laws for him, and he will give it his sole allegiance, so that by that very allegiance every human law will lose all binding and controlling power in his eyes.

The Christian is independent of every human authority by the fact that he regards the divine law of love, implanted in the soul of every man, and brought before his consciousness by Christ, as the sole guide of his life and other men's also.

The Christian may be subjected to external violence, he may be deprived of bodily freedom, he may be in bondage to his passions (he who commits sin is the slave of sin), but he cannot be in bondage in the sense of being forced by any danger or by any threat of external harm to perform an act which is against his conscience.

He cannot be compelled to do this, because the deprivations and sufferings which form such a powerful weapon against men of the State conception of life, have not the least power to compel him.

Deprivations and sufferings take from them the happiness for which they live; but far from disturbing the happiness of the Christian, which consists in the consciousness of fulfilling the will of God, they may even intensify it, when they are inflicted on him for fulfilling His will.

And therefore the Christian who is subject

only to the inner divine law, not only cannot carry out the enactments of the external law, when they are not in agreement with the divine law of love which he acknowledges (as is usually the case with state obligations), he cannot even recognise the duty of obedience to any one or anything whatever, he cannot recognise the duty of what is called allegiance.

For a Christian the oath of allegiance to any government whatever—the very act which is regarded as the foundation of the existence of a state—is a direct renunciation of Christianity. For the man who promises unconditional obedience in the future to laws, made or to be made, by that very promise is in the most positive manner renouncing Christianity, which means obeying in every circumstance of life only the divine law of love he recognises within him.

Under the pagan conception of life it was possible to carry out the will of the temporal authorities, without infringing the law of God, expressed in circumcisions, sabbaths, fixed times of prayer, abstention from certain kinds of food, and so on. The one law was not opposed to the other. But that is just the distinction between the Christian religion and heathen religion. Christianity does not require of a man certain definite negative acts, but puts him in a new, different relation to men, from which may result the most

diverse acts, which cannot be defined beforehand. And therefore the Christian not only cannot promise to obey the will of any other man, without knowing what will be required by that will; he not only cannot obey the changing laws of man, but he cannot even promise to do anything definite at a certain time, or to abstain from doing anything for a certain time. For he cannot know what at any time will be required of him by that Christian law of love, obedience to which constitutes the meaning of life for him. The Christian, in promising unconditional fulfilment of the laws of men in the future, would show plainly by that promise that the inner law of God does not constitute for him the sole law of his life.

For a Christian to promise obedience to men, or the laws of men, is just as though a workman bound to one employer should also promise to carry out every order that might be given him by outsiders. One cannot serve two masters.

The Christian is independent of human authority, because he acknowledges God's authority alone. His law, revealed by Christ, he recognises in himself and voluntarily obeys it.

And this independence is gained, not by means of strife, not by the destruction of existing forms of life, but only by a change in the interpretation of life. This independ-

ence results first from the Christian recognising the law of love, revealed to him by his Teacher, as perfectly sufficient for all human relations, and therefore he regards every use of force as unnecessary and unlawful; and secondly, from the fact that those deprivations and sufferings, or threats of deprivations and sufferings (which reduce the man of the social conception of life to the necessity of obeying), to the Christian from his different conception of life, present themselves merely as the inevitable conditions of existence. And these conditions, without striving against them by force, he patiently endures, like sickness, hunger, and every other hardship, but they cannot serve him as a guide for his actions. The only guide for the Christian's actions is to be found in the divine principle living within him, which cannot be checked or governed by anything.

The Christian acts according to the words of the prophecy applied to his Teacher: "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory." (Matt. xii. 19, 20.)

The Christian will not dispute with any one, nor attack any one, nor use violence against any one. On the contrary, he will bear violence without opposing it. But by this very attitude to violence, he will not

only himself be free, but will free the whole world from all external power.

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." If there were any doubt of Christianity being the truth, the perfect liberty, that nothing can curtail, which a man experiences directly he makes the Christian theory of life his own, would be an unmistakable proof of its truth.

Men in their present condition are like a swarm of bees hanging in a cluster to a branch. The position of the bees on the branch is temporary, and must inevitably be changed. They must start off and find themselves a habitation. Each of the bees knows this, and desires to change her own and the others' position, but no one of them can do it till the rest of them do it. They cannot all start off at once, because one hangs on to another and hinders her from separating from the swarm, and therefore they all continue to hang there. It would seem that the bees could never escape from their position, just as it seems that worldly men caught in the toils of the state conception of life can never escape. And there would be no escape for the bees, if each of them were not a living, separate creature, endowed with wings of its own. Similarly there would be no escape for men if each were not a living being endowed with the faculty of entering into the Christian conception of life.

If every bee who could fly, did not try to fly, the others, too, would never be stirred, and the swarm would never change its position. And if the man who has mastered the Christian conception of life would not, without waiting for other people, begin to live in accordance with this conception, mankind would never change its position. But only let one bee spread her wings, start off and fly away, and after her another, and another, and the clinging, inert cluster would become a freely-flying swarm of bees. Just in the same way, only let one man look at life as Christianity teaches him to look at it, and after him let another and another do the same, and the enchanted circle of existence in the state conception of life, from which there seemed no escape, will be broken through.

But men think that to set all men free by this means is too slow a process, that they must find some other means by which they could set all men free at once. It is just as though the bees who want to start and fly away should consider it too long a process to wait for all the swarm to start one by one; and should think they ought to find some means by which it would not be necessary for every separate bee to spread her wings and fly off, but by which the whole swarm could fly at once where it wanted to. But that is not possible; till a first, a second, a third, a hundredth bee spreads her wings and flies off

of her own accord, the swarm will not fly off and will not begin its new life. Till every individual man makes the Christian conception of life his own, and begins to live in accord with it, there can be no solution of the problem of human life, and no establishment of a new form of life.

One of the most striking phenomena of our times is precisely this advocacy of slavery, which is promulgated among the masses, not by governments, in whom it is inevitable, but by men who in advocating socialistic theories regard themselves as the champions of freedom.

These people advance the opinion that the amelioration of life, the bringing of the facts of life into harmony with the conscience, will come, not as the result of the personal efforts of individual men, but of itself as the result of a certain possible reconstruction of society effected in some way or other. The idea is promulgated, that men ought not to walk on their own legs where they want and ought to go, but that a kind of floor under their feet will be moved somehow, so that on it they can reach where they ought to go without moving their own legs. And therefore all their efforts ought to be directed, not to going so far as their strength allows in the direction they ought to go, but to standing still and constructing such a floor.

In the sphere of political economy a theory

is propounded which amounts to saying that the worse things are, the better they are; that the greater the accumulation of capital, and therefore the oppression of the workman, the nearer the day of emancipation, and therefore every personal effort on the part of a man to free himself from the oppression of capital is useless. In the sphere of government it is maintained that the greater the power of the government, which, according to this theory, ought to intervene in every department of private life in which it has not yet intervened, the better it will be, and that therefore we ought to invoke the interference of government in private life. In politics and international questions it is maintained that the improvement of the means of destruction, the multiplication of armaments, will lead to the necessity of making war by means of congresses, arbitration, and so on. And, marvellous to say, so great is the dulness of men, that they believe in these theories, in spite of the fact that the whole course of life, every step they take, shows how unworthy they are of belief.

The people are suffering from oppression, and to deliver them from this oppression they are advised to frame general measures for the improvement of their position, which measures are to be entrusted to the authorities, and themselves to continue to yield obedience to the authorities. And obviously

all that results from this is only greater power in the hands of the authorities, and greater oppression resulting from it.

Not one of the errors of men carries them so far away from the aim towards which they are struggling as this very one. They do all kinds of different things for the attainment of their aim, but not the one simple, obvious thing which is within reach of every one. They devise the subtlest means for changing the position which is irksome to them, but not that simplest means—that every one should refrain from doing what leads to that position.

I have been told a story of a gallant police officer, who came to a village where the peasants were in insurrection and the military had been called out, and he undertook to pacify the insurrection in the spirit of Nicholas I., by his personal influence alone. He ordered some loads of rods to be brought, and collecting all the peasants together into a barn, he went in with them, locking the door after him. To begin with, he so terrified the peasants by his loud threats that, reduced to submission by him, they set to work to flog one another at his command. And so they flogged one another until a simpleton was found who would not allow himself to be flogged, and shouted to his companions not to flog one another. Only then the flogging ceased, and the police officer made his escape.

Well, this simpleton's advice would never be followed by men of the state conception of life, who continue to flog one another, and teach people that this very act of self-castigation is the last word of human wisdom.

Indeed, can one imagine a more striking instance of men flogging themselves than the submissiveness with which men of our times will perform the very duties required of them to keep them in slavery, especially the duty of military service? We see people enslaving themselves, suffering from this slavery, and believing that it must be so, that it does not matter, and will not hinder the emancipation of men, which is being prepared somewhere, somehow, in spite of the ever-increasing growth of slavery.

In fact, take any man of the present time whatever (I don't mean a true Christian, but an average man of the present day) educated or uneducated, believing or unbelieving, rich or poor, married or unmarried. Such a man lives working at his work, or enjoying his amusements, spending the fruits of his labours on himself or on those near to him, and, like every one, hating every kind of restriction and deprivation, dissension and suffering. Such a man is going his way peaceably, when suddenly people come and say to him: first, promise and swear to us that you will slavishly obey us in everything we dictate to you, and will consider absolutely good and authori-

tative everything we plan, decide, and call law. Secondly, hand over a part of the fruits of your labours for us to dispose of—we will use the money to keep you in slavery, and to hinder you from forcibly opposing our orders. Thirdly, elect others, or be yourself elected, to take a pretended share in the government, knowing all the while that the government will proceed quite without regard to the foolish speeches you, and those like you, may utter, and knowing that its proceedings will be according to our will, the will of those who have the army in their hands. Fourthly, come at a certain time to the law courts and take your share in those senseless cruelties which we perpetrate on sinners, and those whom we have corrupted, in the shape of penal servitude, exile, solitary confinement, and death. And fifthly and lastly, more than all this, in spite of the fact that you may be on the friendliest terms with people of other nations, be ready, directly we order you to do so, to regard those whom we indicate to you as your enemies; and be ready to assist, either in person or by proxy, in the devastation, plunder, and murder of their men, women, children, and aged alike—possibly your own kinsmen or relations—if that is necessary to us.

One would expect that every man of the present day who has a grain of sense left, might reply to such requirements, "But why should I do all this?" One would think every right-

minded man must say in amazement : " Why should I promise to yield obedience to everything that has been decreed first by Salisbury, then by Gladstone ; one day by Boulanger, and another by parliament ; one day by Peter III., the next by Catherine, and the day after by Pougachef ; one day by a mad king of Bavaria, another by William ? Why should I promise to obey them, knowing them to be wicked or foolish people, or else not knowing them at all ? Why am I to hand over the fruits of my labours to them in the shape of taxes, knowing that the money will be spent on the support of officials, prisons, churches, armies, on things that are harmful, and on my own enslavement ? Why should I punish myself ? Why should I go wasting my time and hoodwinking myself, giving to miscreant evil-doers a semblance of legality, by taking part in elections, and pretending that I am taking part in the government, when I know very well that the real control of the government is in the hands of those who have got hold of the army ? Why should I go to the law courts to take part in the trial and punishment of men because they have sinned, knowing, if I am a Christian, that the law of vengeance is replaced by the law of love, and, if I am an educated man, that punishments do not reform, but only deprave those on whom they are inflicted ? And why, most of all, am I to consider as enemies the people of

a neighbouring nation, with whom I have hitherto lived and with whom I wish to live in love and harmony, and to kill and rob them, or to bring them to misery, simply in order that the keys of the temple at Jerusalem may be in the hands of one archbishop and not another, that one German, and not another, may be prince in Bulgaria, or that the English rather than the American merchants may capture seals?

And why, most of all, should I take part in person or hire others to murder my own brothers and kinsmen? Why should I flog myself? It is altogether unnecessary for me; it is hurtful to me, and from every point of view it is immoral, base, and vile. So why should I do this? If you tell me that if I do not it, I shall receive some injury from some one, then, in the first place, I cannot anticipate from any one an injury so great as the injury you bring on me if I obey you; and secondly, it is perfectly clear to me, that if we our own selves do not flog ourselves, no one will flog us.

As for the government—that means, the Tsars, ministers, and officials with pens in their hands, who cannot force us into doing anything, as that officer of police compelled the peasants; the men who will drag us to the law court, to prison, and to execution—are not Tsars, or officials with pens in their hands, but the very people who

are in the same position as we are? And it is just as unprofitable, and harmful, and unpleasant to them to be flogged as to me, and therefore there is every likelihood that if I open their eyes they not only would not treat me with violence, but would do just as I am doing.

Thirdly, even if it should come to pass that I had to suffer for it, even then it would be better for me to be exiled or sent to prison for standing up for common-sense and right—which, if not to-day, at least within a very short time, must be triumphant—than to suffer for folly and wrong which must come to an end directly. And therefore, even in that case it is better to run the risk of their banishing me, shutting me up in prison, or executing me, than of my living all my life in bondage, through my own fault, to wicked men; better is this than the possibility of being destroyed by victorious enemies, and being stupidly tortured and killed by them, in fighting for a cannon, or a piece of land of no use to anyone, or for a senseless rag called a banner.

I don't want to flog myself and I won't do it. I have no reason to do it. Do it yourselves, if you want it done; but I won't do it.

One would have thought that not religious or moral feeling alone, but the simplest common sense and foresight should impel every man of the present day to answer and to act in that way. But not so; men of the state

conception of life are of the opinion that to act in that way is not necessary, and is even prejudicial to the attainment of their object, the emancipation of men from slavery. They hold that we must continue, like the police-officer's peasants, to flog one another, consoling ourselves with the reflection that we are talking away in the assemblies and meetings, founding trades-unions, marching through the streets on the 1st of May, getting up conspiracies, and stealthily teasing the government that is flogging us, and that through all this it will be brought to pass that, by enslaving ourselves in closer and closer bondage, we shall very soon be free.

Nothing hinders the emancipation of men from slavery so much as this amazing error. Instead of every man directing his energies to freeing himself, to transforming his conception of life, people seek for an external united method of gaining freedom, and continue to rivet their chains faster and faster.

It is much as if men were to maintain that to make up a fire there was no need to kindle any of the coals, but that all that was necessary was to arrange the coals in a certain order. Yet the fact that the freedom of all men will be brought about only through the freedom of individual persons, becomes more and more clear as time goes on. The freedom of individual men, in the name of the Christian conception of life, from state

domination, which was formerly an exceptional and unnoticed phenomenon, has of late acquired threatening significance for state authorities.

If in a former age, in the Roman times, it happened that a Christian confessed his religion and refused to take part in sacrifices, and to worship the emperors or the gods; or in the Middle Ages a Christian refused to worship images, or to acknowledge the authority of the pope—these cases were in the first place a matter of chance. A man might be placed under the necessity of confessing his faith, or he might live all his life without being placed under this necessity. But now all men, without exception, are subjected to this trial of their faith. Every man of the present day is under the necessity of taking part in the cruelties of pagan life, or of refusing all participation in them. And secondly, in those days cases of refusal to worship the gods, or the images, or the pope, were not incidents that had any material bearing on the state. Whether men worshipped or did not worship the gods, or the images, or the pope, the state remained just as powerful. But now cases of refusing to comply with the unchristian demands of the government are striking at the very root of state authority, because the whole authority of the state is based on the compliance with these unchristian demands.

The sovereign powers of the world have in the course of time been brought into a position in which, for their own preservation, they must require from all men actions which cannot be performed by men who profess true Christianity.

And therefore in our days every profession of true Christianity, by any individual man, strikes at the most essential power of the state, and inevitably leads the way for the emancipation of all.

What importance, one might think, can one attach to such an incident as some dozens of crazy fellows, as people will call them, refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the government, refusing to pay taxes, to take part in law proceedings or in military service.

These people are punished and exiled to a distance, and life goes on in its old way. One might think there was no importance in such incidents; but yet it is just those incidents, more than anything else, that will undermine the power of the state and prepare the way for the freedom of men. These are the individual bees, who are beginning to separate from the swarm, and are flying near it, waiting till the whole swarm can no longer be prevented from starting off after them. And the governments know this, and fear such incidents more than all the Socialists, Communists, and Anarchists, and their plots and dynamite bombs.

A new reign is beginning. According to the universal rule and established order it is required that all the subjects should take the oath of allegiance to the new government. There is a general decree to that effect, and all are summoned to the council-houses to take the oath. All at once one man in Perm, another in Tula, a third in Moscow, and a fourth in Kalouga, declare that they will not take the oath, and though there is no communication between them, they all explain their refusal on the same grounds—namely, that swearing is forbidden by the law of Christ, and that even if swearing had not been forbidden, they could not, in the spirit of the law of Christ, promise to perform the evil actions required of them in the oath, such as informing against all such as may act against the interests of the government, or defending their government with firearms, or attacking its enemies. They are brought before rural police officers, district police captains, priests, and governors. They are admonished, questioned, threatened, and punished; but they adhere to their resolution, and do not take the oath. And among the millions of those who did take the oath, those dozens go on living who did not take the oath. And they are questioned: "What! didn't you take the oath?" "No, I didn't take the oath." "And what happened—nothing?" "Nothing."

The subjects of a state are all bound to pay taxes. And every one pays taxes, till suddenly one man in Kharkov, another in Tver and a third in Samara, refuse to pay taxes—all, as though in collusion, saying the same thing. One says he will only pay when they tell him what object the money taken from him will be spent on. "If it is for good deeds," he says, "he will give it of his own accord, and more even than is required of him. If for evil deeds, then he will give nothing voluntarily, because by the law of Christ, whose follower he is, he cannot take part in evil deeds." The others, too, say the same in other words, and will not voluntarily pay the taxes.

Those who have anything to be taken have their property taken from them by force; as for those who have nothing, they are left alone.

"What! didn't you pay the tax?"

"No, I didn't pay it."

"And what happened—nothing?"

"Nothing."

There is the institution of passports. Every one moving from his place of residence is bound to carry one, and to pay a duty on it. Suddenly people are to be found in various places declaring that to carry a passport is not necessary, that one ought not to recognise one's dependence on a state which exists by means of force; and these people do not

carry passports, or pay the duty on them. And again, it is impossible to force those people by any means to do what is required. They send them to gaol, and let them out again, and these people live without passports.

All peasants are bound to fill certain police offices—that of village constable, and of watchman and so on. Suddenly in Kharkov a peasant refuses to perform this duty, justifying his refusal on the ground that by the law of Christ, of which he is a follower, he cannot put any man in fetters, lock him up, or drag him from place to place. The same declaration is made by a peasant in Tver, another in Tambov. These peasants are abused, beaten, shut up in prison, but they stick to their resolution and don't fill these offices against their convictions. And at last they cease to appoint them as constables. And again nothing happens.

All citizens are obliged to take a share in law-proceedings in the character of jury-men. Suddenly the most different people—mechanics, professors, tradesmen, peasants, servants, as though by agreement, refuse to fill this office, and not on the grounds allowed as sufficient by law, but because any process at law is, according to their views, unchristian. They fine these people, trying not to let them have an opportunity of explaining their motives in public, and

replace them by others. And again nothing can be done.

All young men of twenty-one years of age are obliged to draw lots for service in the army. All at once one young man in Moscow, another in Tver, a third in Kharkov, and a fourth in Kiev, present themselves before the authorities, and, as though by previous agreement, declare that they will not take the oath, they will not serve because they are Christians. I will give the details of one of the first cases since they have become more frequent, which I happen to know about.* The same treatment has been repeated in every other case. A young man of fair education refuses in the Moscow Town-Hall to take the oath. No attention is paid to what he says, and it is requested that he should pronounce the words of the oath like the rest. He declines, quoting a particular passage of the Gospel in which swearing is forbidden. No attention is paid to his arguments, and he is again requested to comply with the order, but he does not comply with it. Then it is supposed that he is a sectary and therefore does not understand Christianity in the right sense—that is to say, not in the sense in which the priests in the pay of the government understand it. And the young man is conducted under

* All the details of this case, as well as those preceding it, are authentic.

escort to the priests, that they may bring him to reason. The priests begin to reason with him, but their efforts in Christ's name to persuade him to renounce Christ obviously have no influence on him ; he is pronounced incorrigible and sent back again to the army. He persists in not taking the oath and openly refuses to perform any military duties. It is a case that has not been provided for by the laws. To overlook such a refusal to comply with the demands of the authorities is out of the question, but to put such a case on a par with simple breach of discipline is also out of the question.

After deliberation among themselves, the military authorities decide to get rid of the troublesome young man, to consider him as a revolutionist, and they despatch him under escort to the committee of the secret police. The police authorities and gendarmes cross-question him, but nothing that he says can be brought under the head of any of the misdemeanours which come under their jurisdiction. And there is no possibility of accusing him either of revolutionary acts or revolutionary plotting, since he declares that he does not wish to attack anything, but on the contrary is opposed to any use of force, and, far from plotting in secret, he seeks every opportunity of saying and doing all that he says and does in the most open manner. And the gendarmes, though they

are bound by no hard-and-fast rules, still find no ground for a criminal charge in the young man, and, like the clergy, they send him back to the army. Again the authorities deliberate together, and decide to accept him though he has not taken the oath, and to enrol him among the soldiers. They put him into the uniform, enrol him, and send him under guard to the place where the army is quartered. There the chief officer of the division which he enters, again expects the young man to perform his military duties and again he refuses to obey, and in the presence of other soldiers explains the reason of his refusal, saying that he as a Christian cannot voluntarily prepare himself to commit murder, which is forbidden by the law of Moses.

This incident occurs in a provincial town. The case awakens the interest, and even the sympathy, not only of outsiders, but even of the officers. And the chief officers consequently do not decide to punish this refusal of obedience with disciplinary measures. To save appearances, though, they shut the young man up in prison, and write to the highest military authorities to inquire what they are to do. To refuse to serve in the army, in which the Tzar himself serves, and which enjoys the blessing of the church, seems insanity from the official point of view. Consequently they write from Petersburg

that, since the young man must be out of his mind, they must not use any severe treatment with him, but must send him to a lunatic asylum, that his mental condition may be inquired into and be scientifically treated. They send him to the asylum in the hope that he will remain there, like another young man, who refused ten years ago at Tver to serve in the army, and who was tortured in the asylum till he submitted. But even this step does not rid the military authorities of the inconvenient man. The doctors examine him, interest themselves warmly in his case, and naturally, finding in him no symptoms of mental disease, send him back to the army. There they receive him, and making believe to have forgotten his refusal, and his motives for it, they again request him to go to drill, and again in the presence of the other soldiers he refuses and explains the reason of his refusal. The affair continues to attract more and more attention, both among the soldiers and the inhabitants of the town. Again they write to Petersburg, and thence comes the decree to transfer the young man to some division of the army stationed on the frontier, in some place where the army is under martial law, where he can be shot for refusing to obey, and where the matter can proceed without attracting observation, seeing that there are few Russians and Christians in such a distant part, but the majority are

foreigners and Mahometans. This is accordingly done. They transfer him to a division stationed on the Zacaspien border, and in company with convicts send him to a chief officer who is notorious for his harshness and severity.

All this time, through all these changes from place to place, the young man is roughly treated, kept in cold, hunger, and filth, and life is made burdensome to him generally. But all these sufferings do not compel him to change his resolution. On the Zacaspien border, where he is again requested to go on guard fully armed, he again declines to obey. He does not refuse to go and stand near the haystacks where they place him, but refuses to take his arms, declaring that he will not use violence in any case against anyone. All this takes place in the presence of the other soldiers. To let such a refusal pass unpunished is impossible, and the young man is put on his trial for breach of discipline. The trial takes place, and he is sentenced to confinement in the military prison for two years. He is again transferred, in company with convicts, by *étape*, to the Caucasus, and there he is shut up in prison, and falls under the irresponsible power of the gaoler. There he is persecuted for a year and a half, but he does not for all that alter his decision not to bear arms, and he explains why he will not do this to everyone with whom he is brought

in contact. At the end of the second year they set him free, before the end of his term of imprisonment, reckoning it contrary to law to keep him in prison after his time of military service was over, and only too glad to get rid of him as soon as possible.

Other men in various parts of Russia behave, as though by agreement, precisely in the same way as this young man, and in all these cases the government has adopted the same timorous, undecided, and secretive course of action. Some of these men are sent to the lunatic asylum, some are enrolled as clerks and transferred to Siberia, some are sent to work in the forests, some are sent to prison, some are fined. And at this very time some men of this kind are in prison, not charged with their real offence—that is, denying the lawfulness of the action of the government—but for non-fulfilment of special obligations imposed by government. Thus an officer of reserve, who did not report his change of residence, and justified this on the ground that he would not serve in the army any longer, was fined thirty roubles for non-compliance with the orders of the superior authority. This fine he also declined voluntarily to pay. In the same way some peasants and soldiers who have refused to be drilled and to bear arms have been placed under arrest on a charge of breach of discipline and insolence.

And cases of refusing to comply with the demands of government when they are opposed to Christianity, and especially cases of refusing to serve in the army, are occurring of late not in Russia only but everywhere. Thus I happen to know that in Servia men of the so-called sect of Nazarenes steadily refuse to serve in the army, and the Austrian Government has been carrying on a fruitless contest with them for years, punishing them with imprisonment. In the year 1885 there were 130 such cases. I know that in Switzerland in the year 1890 there were men in prison in the castle of Chillon for declining to serve in the army, whose resolution was not shaken by their punishment. There have been such cases in Sweden, and the men who refused obedience were sent to prison in exactly the same way and the Government studiously concealed these cases from the people. There have been similar cases also in Prussia. I know of the case of a sub-lieutenant of the Guards who, in 1891, declared to the authorities in Berlin that he would not as a Christian continue to serve, and in spite of all admonitions, threats and punishments he stuck to his resolution. In the South of France a society has arisen of late bearing the name of the Hinschists (these facts are taken from the *Peace Herald*, July 1891), the members of which refuse to enter military service on the grounds of their Christian principles. At

first they were enrolled in the ambulance corps ; but now, as their numbers increase, they are subjected to punishment for non-compliance ; but they still refuse to bear arms just the same.

The Socialists, the Communists, the Anarchists, with their bombs and riots and revolutions, are not nearly so much dreaded by governments as these disconnected individuals coming from different parts, and all justifying their non-compliance on the grounds of the same religion, which is known to all the world.

Every government knows by what means and in what manner to defend itself from revolutionists, and has resources for doing so, and therefore does not dread these external foes. But what are governments to do against men who show the uselessness, superfluousness, and perniciousness of all governments, and who do not contend against them, but simply do not need them and do without them, and therefore are unwilling to take any part in them ?

The revolutionists say : "The form of government is bad in this respect and that respect ; we must overturn it and substitute this or that form of government." The Christian says : "I know nothing about the form of government—I don't know whether it is good or bad ; and I don't want to overturn it precisely because I don't know whether

it's good or bad; but, for the very same reason, I don't want to support it either. And I not only don't want to, but I can't, because what it demands of me is against my conscience."

All state obligations are against the conscience of a Christian—the oath of allegiance, taxes, law proceedings, and military service. And the whole power of the government rests on these very obligations.

Revolutionary enemies attack the government from without. Christianity does not attack it at all, but, from within, it destroys all the foundations on which government rests.

Among the Russian people, especially since the age of Peter I., the protest of Christianity against the government has never ceased, and the social organisation has been such that men emigrate in communes to Turkey, to China, and to uninhabited lands, and not only feel no need of state aid, but always regard the state as a useless burden, only to be endured as a misfortune, whether it happens to be Turkish, Russian, or Chinese. And so, too, among the Russian people, more and more frequent examples have of late appeared of conscious Christian freedom from subjection to the state. And these examples are the more alarming for the government from the fact that these non-compliant persons often belong, not to the so-called lower, uneducated classes, but are men of fair, or good education;

and also from the fact that they do not in these days justify their position by any mystic and exceptional views, as in former times—do not associate themselves with any superstitious or fanatic rites, like the sects who practise self-immolation by fire, or the wandering pilgrims; but put their refusal on the very simplest and clearest grounds comprehensible to all, and recognised as true by all.

Thus they refuse the voluntary payment of taxes, because taxes are spent on deeds of violence; on the pay of men of violence, soldiers, on the construction of prisons, fortresses and cannons. They as Christians regard it as sinful and immoral to have any hand in such deeds.

Those who refuse to take the oath of allegiance refuse because to promise obedience to authorities—that is, to men who are given to deeds of violence—is contrary to the sense of Christ's teaching. They refuse to take the oath in the law courts because oaths are directly forbidden by the Gospel. They refuse to perform police duties, because in the performance of these duties they must use force against their brothers and ill-treat them, and a Christian cannot do that. They refuse to take part in trials at law because they consider every appeal to law is fulfilling the law of vengeance, which is inconsistent with the Christian law of forgiveness and

love. They refuse to take any part in military preparations and in the army, because they cannot be executioners and they are unwilling to prepare themselves to be so.

The motives in all these cases are so excellent that, however despotic governments may be, they could hardly punish them openly. To punish men for refusing to act against their conscience the government must renounce all claim to good sense and benevolence. And they assure people that they only rule in the name of good sense and benevolence.

What are governments to do against such people ?

Governments can, of course, flog to death or execute or keep in perpetual imprisonment all enemies who want to overturn them by violence, they can lavish gold on that section of the people who are ready to destroy their enemies. But what can they do against men who, without wishing to overturn or destroy anything, desire simply for their part to do nothing against the law of Christ, and who, therefore, refuse to perform the commonest state requirements, which are, therefore, the most indispensable to the maintenance of the state ?

If they had been revolutionists, advocating and practising violence and murder, their suppression would have been an easy matter ; some of them could have been bought over,

some could have been duped, some could have been overawed, and those who could not be bought over, duped or overawed would have been treated as criminals, enemies of society—would have been executed or imprisoned, and the crowd would have approved of the action of the government. If they had been fanatics, professing some peculiar belief, it might have been possible, in disproving the superstitious errors mixed in with their religion, to attack also the truth they advocate. But what is to be done with men who profess no revolutionary ideas nor any peculiar religious dogmas ; but merely, because they are unwilling to do evil to any man, refuse to take the oath, to pay taxes, to take part in law proceedings, to serve in the army, to fulfil in fact any of the obligations upon which the whole fabric of a state rests ? What is to be done with such people ? To buy them over with bribes is impossible ; the very risks to which they voluntarily expose themselves show that they are incorruptible. To dupe them into believing that this is their duty to God, is also impossible, since their refusal is based on the clear, unmistakable law of God, recognised even by those who are trying to compel men to act against it. To terrify them by threats is still less possible, because the deprivations and sufferings to which they are subjected only strengthen their desire

to follow the faith by which they are commanded—to obey God rather than men, and not to fear those who can destroy the body, but to fear Him who can destroy body and soul. To kill them or keep them in perpetual imprisonment is also impossible. These men have friends, and a past; their way of thinking and acting is well known; they are known by every one for good, gentle, peaceable people, and they cannot be regarded as criminals who must be removed for the safety of society. And to put men to death who are regarded as good men is to provoke others to champion them and justify their refusal. And it is only necessary to explain the reasons of their refusal to make clear to every one that these reasons have the same force for all other men, and that they all ought to have done the same long ago. These cases put the ruling powers into a desperate position. They see that the prophecy of Christianity is coming to pass—that it is loosening the fetters of those in chains, and setting free them that are in bondage, and that this must inevitably be the end of all oppressors. The ruling authorities see this, they know that their hours are numbered and they can do nothing. All that they can do to save themselves is only deferring the hour of their downfall. And this they do, but their position is none the less desperate.

It is like the position of a conqueror who is trying to save a town which has been set on fire by its own inhabitants. Directly he puts out the conflagration in one place, it is alight in two other places; directly he gives in to the fire and cuts off what is on fire from a large building, the building itself is alight at both ends. These separate fires may be few, but they are burning with a flame which, however small a spark it starts from, never ceases till it has set the whole ablaze.

Thus it is that the ruling authorities are in such a defenceless position before men who advocate Christianity that but little is necessary to overthrow this sovereign power which seems so powerful, and has held such an exalted position for so many centuries. And yet social reformers are busy promulgating the idea that it is not necessary, and is even pernicious and immoral, for every man separately to work out his own freedom. As though, while one set of men have been at work a long while turning a river into a new channel, and had dug out a complete water-course and had only to open the floodgates for the water to rush in and do the rest, another set of men should come along and begin to advise them that it would be much better, instead of letting the water out, to construct a machine which would ladle the water up from one side and pour it over the other side.

But the thing has gone too far. Already ruling governments feel their weak and defenceless position, and men of Christian principles are awakening from their apathy, and already begin to feel their power.

"I am come to send a fire on the earth," said Christ, "and what will I, if it be already kindled?"

And this fire is beginning to burn.

CHAPTER X

EVIL CANNOT BE SUPPRESSED BY THE PHYSICAL FORCE OF THE GOVERNMENT—THE MORAL PROGRESS OF HUMANITY IS BROUGHT ABOUT NOT ONLY BY INDIVIDUAL RECOGNITION OF TRUTH, BUT ALSO THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PUBLIC OPINION

Christianity destroys the state—But which is most necessary : Christianity or the state ?—There are some who assert the necessity of a state organisation, and others who deny it, both arguing from same first principles—Neither contention can be proved by abstract argument—The question must be decided by the stage in the development of conscience of each man, which will either prevent or allow him to support a government organisation—Recognition of the futility and immorality of supporting a State organisation contrary to Christian principles will decide the question for every man, in spite of any action on the part of the state—Argument of those who defend the government, that it is a form of social life, needed to protect the good from the wicked, till all nations and all members of each nation have become Christians—The most wicked are always those in power—The whole history of humanity is the history of the forcible appropriation of power by the wicked and their oppression of the good—The recognition by governments of the necessity of opposing evil by force is equivalent to suicide on their part—The abolition of state-violence cannot increase the sum total of acts of violence—The suppression of the use of force is not only possible, but is even taking place before our eyes—But it will never be suppressed by the violence of government, but

through men who have attained power by evidence recognising its emptiness and becoming better and less capable of using force—Individual men and also whole nations pass through this process—By this means Christianity is diffused through the consciousness of men, not only in spite of the use of violence by government, but even through its action, and therefore the suppression is not to be dreaded, but is brought about by the national progress of life—Objection of those who defend state organisation that universal adoption of Christianity is hardly likely to be realised at any time—The general adoption of the truths of Christianity is being brought about not only by the gradual and inward means: that is, by knowledge of the truth, prophetic insight, and recognition of the emptiness of power, and renunciation of it by individuals: but also by another external means: the acceptance of a new truth by whole masses of men on a lower level of development through simple confidence in their leaders—When a certain stage in the diffusion of a truth has been reached, a public opinion is created which impels a whole mass of men formerly antagonistic to the new truth to accept it—And therefore all men may quickly be brought to renounce the use of violence when once a Christian public opinion is established—The conviction of force being necessary hinders the establishment of a Christian public opinion—The use of violence leads men to distrust the spiritual force which is the only force by which they advance—Neither nations nor individuals have been really subjugated by force, but only by public opinion, which no force can resist—Savage nations and savage men can only be subdued by the diffusion of a Christian standard among them, while actually Christian nations in order to subdue them do all they can to destroy a Christian standard—These fruitless attempts to civilise savages cannot be adduced as proofs that men cannot be subdued by Christianity—Violence by corrupting public opinion only hinders the social organisation from being what it ought to be—And by the use of violence being suppressed a Christian public opinion would be established—Whatever might be the result of the suppression of use of force, this unknown future could not be worse than the present condition, and so there is no need to dread it—To attain knowledge of the unknown, and to move towards it, is the essence of life.

CHRISTIANITY in its true sense puts an end to government. So it was understood at its very commencement; it was for that cause that Christ was crucified. So it has always been understood by people who were not under the necessity of justifying a Christian government. Only from the time that the heads of government assumed an external and nominal Christianity, men began to invent all the impossible, cunningly devised theories by means of which Christianity can be reconciled with government. But no honest and serious-minded man of our day can help seeing the incompatibility of true Christianity—the doctrine of meekness, forgiveness of injuries, and love—with government, with its pomp, acts of violence, executions and wars. The profession of true Christianity not only excludes the possibility of recognising government, but even destroys its very foundations.

But if it is so, and we are right in saying that Christianity is incompatible with government, then the question naturally presents itself: Which is more necessary to the good of humanity, in which way is men's happiness best to be secured, by maintaining the organisation of government or by destroying it and replacing it by Christianity?

Some people maintain that government is more necessary for humanity, that the destruction of the state organisation would

involve the destruction of all that humanity has gained, that the state has been and still is the only form in which humanity can develop. The evil which we see among peoples living under a government organisation they attribute not to that type of society, but to its abuses, which, they say, can be corrected without destroying it, and thus humanity, without discarding the state organisation, can develop and attain a high degree of happiness. And men of this way of thinking bring forward in support of their views arguments which they think irrefutable, drawn from history, philosophy and even religion. But there are men who hold, on the contrary, that, as there was a time when humanity lived without government, such an organisation is temporary, and that a time must come when men need a new organisation and that that time has come now. And men of this way of thinking also bring forward in support of their views arguments which they think irrefutable from philosophy, history and religion.

Volumes may be written in defence of the former view (and volumes indeed have long ago been written and more will still be written on that side), but much also can be written against it (and much also, and most brilliantly, has been written—though more recently—on this side).

And it cannot be proved, as the champions

of the state maintain, that the destruction of government involves a social chaos, mutual spoliation and murder, the destruction of all social institutions and the return of mankind to barbarism. Nor can it be proved, as the opponents of government maintain, that men have already become so wise and good that they will not spoil or murder one another, but will prefer peaceful association to hostilities; that of their own accord, unaided by the state, they will make all the arrangements that they need, and that therefore government, far from being any aid, under show of guarding men exerts a pernicious and brutalising influence over them. It is impossible to prove either of these contentions by abstract reasoning. Still less possible is it to prove them by experiment, since the whole matter turns on the question, "Ought we to try the experiment?" The question whether or not the time has come to make an end of government would be unanswerable, except that there exists another living means of settling it beyond dispute.

We may dispute upon the question whether the nestlings are ready to do without the mother-hen and to come out of the eggs, or whether they are not yet advanced enough. But the young birds will decide the question without any regard for our arguments when they find themselves cramped for space in the eggs. Then they will begin to try them

with their beaks and come out of them of their own accord.

It is the same with the question whether the time has come to do away with the governmental type of society and to replace it by a new type. If a man, through the growth of a higher conscience, can no longer comply with the demands of government, he finds himself cramped by it and at the same time no longer needs its protection. When this comes to pass the question whether men are ready to discard the governmental type is solved. And the conclusion will be as final for them as for the young birds hatched out of the eggs. Just as no power in the world can put them back into the shells, so can no power in the world bring men again under the governmental type of society when once they have outgrown it.

"It may well be that government was necessary and is still necessary for all the advantages which you attribute to it," says the man who has mastered the Christian theory of life. "I only know that, on the one hand, government is no longer necessary for *me*, and on the other hand, *I* can no longer carry out the measures that are necessary to the existence of a government. Settle for yourselves what you need for your life. I cannot prove the need or the harm of governments in general. I know only what I need and do not need, what I can do and

what I cannot. I know that I do not need to divide myself off from other nations, and therefore I cannot admit that I belong exclusively to any state or nation, or that I owe allegiance to any government. I know that I do not need all the government institutions organised within the state, and, therefore, I cannot deprive people who need my labour to give it in the form of taxes to institutions which I do not need, which for all I know may be pernicious. I know that I have no need of the administration, nor of courts of justice founded upon force, and therefore I can take no part in either. I know that I do not need to attack and slaughter other nations or to defend myself from them with arms, and therefore I can take no part in wars or preparations for wars. It may well be that there are people who cannot help regarding all this as necessary and indispensable. I cannot dispute the question with them, I can only speak for myself; but I can say with absolute certainty that I do not need it, and that I cannot do it. And I do not need this and I cannot do it, not because such is my own, my personal will, but because such is the will of Him who sent me into life, and gave me an indubitable law for my conduct through life.

Whatever arguments may be advanced in support of the contention that the suppression of government authority would be injurious

and would lead to great calamities, men who have once outgrown the governmental form of society cannot go back to it again. And all the reasoning in the world cannot make the man who has outgrown the governmental form of society take part in actions disallowed by his conscience, any more than the full-grown bird can be made to return into the egg-shell.

"But even if it be so," say the champions of the existing order of things, "still the suppression of government violence can only be possible and desirable when all men have become Christians. So long as among people nominally Christian there are unchristian wicked men, who for the gratification of their own lusts are ready to do harm to others, the suppression of government authority far from being a blessing to others would only increase their miseries. The suppression of the governmental type of society is not only undesirable so long as there is only a minority of true Christians. It would not even be desirable if the whole of a nation were Christians, but among or around them there were still unchristian men of other nations. For these unchristian men would rob, outrage, and kill the Christians with impunity and would make their lives miserable. All that would result would be that the bad would oppress and outrage the good with impunity. And therefore the authority of

government must not be suppressed till all the wicked and rapacious people in the world are extinct. And since this will either never be, or at least cannot be for a long time to come, in spite of the efforts of individual Christians to be independent of government authority, it ought to be maintained in the interests of the majority. The champions of government assert that without it the wicked will oppress and outrage the good, and that the power of the government enables the good to resist the wicked.

But in this assertion the champions of the existing order of things take for granted the very proposition they want to prove. When they say that except for the government the bad would oppress the good, they take it for granted that the good are those who at the present time are in possession of power, and the bad are those who are in subjection to it. But this is just what wants proving. It would only be true if the custom of our society were what is, or rather is supposed to be, the custom in China : that is, that the good always rule ; and that directly those at the head of government cease to be better than those they rule over, the citizens are bound to remove them. This is supposed to be the custom in China ; in reality it is not so and can never be so. For to remove the heads of a government ruling by force, it is not the right alone, but the power to do so,

that is needed. So that even in China this is only an imaginary custom. And in our Christian world we do not even suppose such a custom, and we have nothing on which to build up the supposition that it is the good or the superior who are in power; in reality it is those who have seized power and who keep it for their own and their retainers' benefit.

The good cannot seize power, nor retain it; to do this, men must love power. And love of power is inconsistent with goodness; but quite consistent with the very opposite qualities—pride, cunning, cruelty.

Without the aggrandisement of self and the abasement of others, without hypocrisies and deceptions, without prisons, fortresses, executions and murders, no power can come into existence or be maintained.

"If the power of government is suppressed the more wicked will oppress the less wicked," say the champions of state authority. But when the Egyptians conquered the Jews, the Romans conquered the Greeks, and the Barbarians conquered the Romans, is it possible that all the conquerors were always better than those they conquered? And the same with the transitions of power within a state from one personage to another: has the power always passed from a worse person to a better one? When Louis XVI. was removed and Robespierre came to power, and afterwards Napoleon—who ruled then, a

better man or a worse? And when were better men in power : when the Versaillist party or when the Commune was in power ? When Charles I. was ruler or when Cromwell ? And when Peter III. was Tsar, or when he was killed and Catherine was Tsaritsa in one half of Russia and Pougachef ruled the other ? Which was bad then and which was good ? All men who happen to be in authority assert that their authority is necessary to keep the bad from oppressing the good, assuming that they themselves are the good *par excellence*, who protect other good people from the bad.

But ruling means using force, and using force means doing to him to whom force is used what he does not like, and what he who uses the force would certainly not like done to himself. Consequently ruling means doing to others what we would not they should do unto us—that is, doing wrong.

To submit means to prefer suffering to using force. And to prefer suffering to using force means to be good, or at least less wicked than those who do unto others what they would not like themselves.

And therefore in all probability not the better but the worse have always ruled and are ruling now. There may be bad men among those who are ruled, but it cannot be that those who are better have generally ruled those who are worse.

It might be possible to suppose this with the inexact heathen definition of good; but with the clear Christian definition of good and evil it is impossible to imagine it.

If the more or less good and the more or less bad cannot be distinguished in the heathen world, the Christian conception of good and evil has so clearly defined the characteristics of the good and the wicked that it is impossible to confound them. According to Christ's teaching, the good are those who are meek and long-suffering, do not resist evil by force, forgive injuries, and love their enemies; those are wicked who exalt themselves, oppress, strive, and use force. Therefore by Christ's teaching there can be no doubt whether the good are to be found among rulers or ruled, and whether the wicked are among the ruled or the rulers. Indeed it is absurd even to speak of Christians ruling.

Non-Christians—that is, those who find the aim of their lives in earthly happiness—must always rule Christians, the aim of whose lives is the renunciation of such earthly happiness.

This difference has always existed and has become more and more defined as the Christian religion has been more widely diffused and more correctly understood.

The more widely true Christianity was diffused and the more it penetrated men's conscience, the more impossible it was for

Christians to be rulers, and the easier it became for non-Christians to rule them.

"To get rid of governmental violence in a society in which all are not true Christians, will only result in the wicked dominating the good and oppressing them with impunity," say the champions of the existing order of things. But it has never been, and cannot be, otherwise. So it has always been from the beginning of the world, and so it is still. *The wicked will always dominate the good, and will always oppress them.* Cain overpowered Abel, the cunning Jacob oppressed the guileless Esau and was in his turn deceived by Laban, Caiaphas and Pilate oppressed Christ, the Roman emperors oppressed Seneca, Epictetus and the good Romans who lived in their times. John IV. with his favourites; the syphilitic, drunken Peter with his buffoons; the vicious Catherine with her paramours—ruled and oppressed the industrious, religious Russians of their times.

William is ruling over the Germans, Stambouloff over the Bulgarians, the Russian officials over the Russian people. The Germans have dominated the Italians, now they dominate the Hungarians and Slavonians; the Turks have dominated and still dominate the Slavonians and Greeks; the English dominate the Hindoos; the Mongolians dominate the Chinese.

So that whether government violence is

suppressed or not, the position of good men, in being oppressed by the wicked, will be unchanged.

To terrify men with the prospect of the wicked dominating the good is impossible, for that is just what has always been, and is now, and cannot but be.

The whole history of pagan times is nothing but a recital of the incidents and means by which the more wicked gained possession of power over the less wicked, and retained it by cruelties and deceptions, ruling over the good under the pretence of guarding the right and protecting the good from the wicked. All the revolutions in history are only examples of the more wicked seizing power and oppressing the good. In declaring that if their authority did not exist, the more wicked would oppress the good, the ruling authorities only show their disinclination to let other oppressors come to power who would like to snatch it from them.

But in asserting this they only accuse themselves. They say that their power, *i.e.* violence, is needed to defend men from other possible oppressors in the present or the future.*

* I may quote in this connection the amazingly naïve and comic declaration of the Russian authorities, the oppressors of other nationalities—the Poles, the Germans of the Baltic provinces, and the Jews. The Russian Government has oppressed its subjects for centuries, and has never troubled itself about the little Russians of Poland, or the Letts of the

The weakness of the use of violence lies in the fact that all the arguments brought forward by oppressors in their own defence can with even better reason be advanced against them. They plead the danger of violence—most often imagined in the future—but they are all the while continuing to practise actual violence themselves. "You say that men used to pillage and murder in the past, and that you are afraid that they will pillage and murder one another if your power were no more. That may happen—or it may not happen. But the fact that you ruin thousands of men in prisons, fortresses, galleys and exile, break up millions of families and ruin millions of men, physically as well as morally, in the army—that fact is not an imaginary but a real act of violence, which, according to your own argument, one ought to oppose by violence. And so you are yourselves these wicked men against whom, according to your own argument, it is absolutely necessary to use violence," the oppressed are sure to say to their oppressors. And non-Christian men always do say, and think and act on this reasoning. If the oppressed are more wicked than their oppressors, they attack them and try to over-

Baltic provinces, or the Russian peasants, exploited by everyone. And now it has all of a sudden become the champion of the oppressed—the very oppressed whom it is itself oppressing!

throw them ; and in favourable circumstances they succeed in overthrowing them, or, what is more common, they rise into the ranks of the oppressors and assist in their acts of violence.

So that the very violence which the champions of government hold up as a terror—pretending that, except for its oppressive power, the wicked would oppress the good—has really always existed and will exist in human society. And, therefore, the suppression of state violence cannot in any case be the cause of increased oppression of the good by the wicked.

If state violence ceased, there would be acts of violence perhaps on the part of different people, other than those who had done deeds of violence before. But the total amount of violence could not in any case be increased by the mere fact of power passing from one set of men to another.

“State violence can only cease when there are no more wicked men in society,” say the champions of the existing order of things, assuming in this, of course, that, since there will always be wicked men, it can never cease. And that would be right enough if it were the case, as they assume, that the oppressors are always the best of men, and that the sole means of saving men from evil is by violence. Then, indeed, violence could never cease. But since this is

not the case, but quite the contrary, that it is not the better oppress the worse, but the worse oppress the better ; and since violence will never put an end to evil, and there is, moreover, another means of putting an end to it, the assertion that violence will never cease is incorrect. The use of violence grows less and less and evidently must disappear. But this will not come to pass, as some champions of the existing order imagine, through the oppressed becoming better and better under the influence of government (on the contrary its influence causes their continual degradation) ; but through the fact that all men are constantly growing better and better of themselves, so that even the most wicked, who are in power, will become less and less wicked, till at last they are so good as to be incapable of using violence.

The progressive movement of humanity does not proceed from the better elements in society seizing power and making those who are subject to them better, by forcible means, as both conservatives and revolutionists imagine. It proceeds first and principally from the fact that all men in general are advancing steadily and undeviatingly towards a more and more conscious assimilation of the Christian theory of life ; and secondly, from the fact that, even apart from conscious spiritual life, men are unconsciously brought into a more Christian attitude to life by the

very process of one set of men grasping the power, and again being replaced by others.

The worse elements of society, gaining possession of power, under the sobering influence which always accompanies power, grow less and less cruel, and become incapable of using cruel forms of violence. Consequently others are able to seize their place, and the same process of softening and, so to say, unconscious Christianising goes on with them. It is something like the process of ebullition. The majority of men, having the non-Christian view of life, always strive for power and struggle to obtain it. In this struggle the most cruel, the coarsest, the least Christian elements of society overpower the most gentle, well disposed, and Christian, and rise by means of their violence to the upper ranks of society. And in them is Christ's prophecy fulfilled: "Woe to you, that are rich! woe unto you that are full! woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you!" For the men who are in possession of power and all that results from it, glory and wealth, and have attained the various aims they set before themselves, recognise the vanity of it all and return to the position from which they came. Charles V., John IV., Alexander I., recognising the emptiness and the evil of power, renounced it because they were incapable of using violence for their own benefit as they had done.

But they are not the solitary examples of this recognition of the emptiness and evil of power. Every one who gains a position of power he has striven for, every general, every minister, every millionaire, every petty official who has gained the place he has coveted for ten years, every rich peasant who has laid by some hundred roubles, passes through this unconscious process of softening.

And not only individual men, but societies of men, whole nations, pass through this process.

The seductions of power, and all the wealth, honour, and luxury it gives seem a sufficient aim for men's efforts only so long as they are unattained. Directly a man reaches them he sees all their vanity, and they gradually lose all their power of attraction. They are like clouds which have form and beauty only from the distance ; directly one ascends into them, all their splendour vanishes.

Men who are in possession of power and wealth, sometimes even those who have gained for themselves their power and wealth, but more often their heirs, cease to be so eager for power, and so cruel in their efforts to obtain it.

Having learnt by experience, under the operation of Christian influence, the vanity of all that is gained by violence, men sometimes in one, sometimes in several generations lose the vices which are generated by the passion for power and wealth. They become less

cruel and so cannot maintain their position, and are expelled from power by others less Christian and more wicked. Thus they return to a rank of society lower in position, but higher in morality, raising thereby the average level of Christian consciousness in men. But directly after them, again, the worst, coarsest, least Christian elements of society rise to the top, and are subjected to the same process as their predecessors, and again in a generation or so, seeing the vanity of what is gained by violence, and having imbibed Christianity, they come down again among the oppressed, and their place is again filled by new oppressors, less brutal than former oppressors, though more so than those they oppress. So that, although power remains externally the same as it was, with every change of the men in power there is a constant increase of the number of men who have been brought by experience to the necessity of assimilating the Christian conception of life, and with every change—though it is the coarsest, cruellest, and least Christian who come into possession of power, they are less coarse and cruel, and more Christian than their predecessors when they gained possession of power.

Power selects and attracts the worst elements of society, transforms them, improves and softens them, and returns them to society.

Such is the process by means of which Christianity, in spite of the hindrances to human progress resulting from the violence of power, gains more and more hold of men. Christianity penetrates to the consciousness of men, not only in spite of the violence of power, but also by means of it.

And therefore the assertion of the champions of the state, that if the power of government were suppressed the wicked would oppress the good, not only fails to show that that is to be dreaded, since it is just what happens now, but proves, on the contrary, that it is governmental power which enables the wicked to oppress the good, and is the evil most desirable to suppress, and that it is being gradually suppressed in the natural course of things.

"But if it be true that governmental power will disappear when those in power become so Christian that they renounce power of their own accord, and there are no men found willing to take their place, and even if this process is already going on," say the champions of the existing order, "when will that come to pass? If, after eighteen hundred years, there are still so many eager for power, and so few anxious to obey, there seems no likelihood of its happening very soon—or indeed of its ever happening at all.

"Even if there are, as there have always been, some men who prefer renouncing power

to enjoying it, the mass of men in reserve, who prefer dominion to subjection, is so great that it is difficult to imagine a time when the number will be exhausted.

“Before this Christianising process could so affect all men one after another that they would pass from the heathen to the Christian conception of life, and would voluntarily abandon power and wealth, it would be necessary that all the coarse, half-savage men, completely incapable of appreciating Christianity or acting upon it, of whom there are always a great many in every Christian society, should be converted to Christianity. More than this, all the savage and absolutely non-Christian peoples, who are so numerous outside the Christian world, must also be converted. And therefore, even if we admit that this Christianising process will some day affect every one, still, judging by the amount of progress it has made in eighteen hundred years, it will be many times eighteen centuries before it will do so. And it is therefore impossible and unprofitable to think at present of anything so impracticable as the suppression of authority. We ought only to try to put authority into the best hands.”

And this criticism would be perfectly just, if the transition from one conception of life to another were only accomplished by the single process of all men, separately and successively, realising, each for himself, the emptiness of

power, and reaching Christian truth by the inner spiritual path. That process goes on unceasingly, and men are passing over to Christianity one after another by this inner way.

But there is also another external means by which men reach Christianity and by which the transition is less gradual.

This transition from one organisation of life to another is not accomplished by degrees like the sand running through the hour-glass grain after grain. It is more like the water filling a vessel floating on water. At first the water only runs in slowly on one side, but as the vessel grows heavier it suddenly begins to sink, and almost instantaneously fills with water.

It is just the same with the transitions of mankind from one conception—and so from one organisation of life—to another. At first only gradually and slowly, one after another men attain to the new truth by the inner spiritual way, and follow it out in life. But when a certain point in the diffusion of the truth has been reached, it is suddenly assimilated by everyone, not by the inner way, but as it were involuntarily.

That is why the champions of the existing order are wrong in arguing that, since only a small section of mankind has passed over to Christianity in eighteen centuries, it must be many times eighteen centuries before all the

remainder do the same. For in that argument they do not take into account any other means, besides the inward spiritual one, by which men assimilate a new truth and pass from one order of life to another.

Men do not only assimilate a truth through recognising it by prophetic insight, or by experience of life. When the truth has become sufficiently widely diffused, men at a lower stage of development accept it all at once simply through confidence in those who have reached it by the inner spiritual way, and are applying it to life.

Every new truth, by which the order of human life is changed and humanity is advanced, is at first accepted by only a very small number of men who understand it through inner spiritual intuition. The remainder of mankind who accepted on trust the preceding truth on which the existing order is based, are always opposed to the diffusion of the new truth.

But seeing that, to begin with, men do not stand still, but are steadily advancing to a greater recognition of the truth and a closer adaptation of their life to it; and secondly, all men, in varying degrees according to their age, their education and their race, are capable of understanding the new truths, at first those who are nearest to the men who have attained the new truth by spiritual intuition, slowly and one by one, but after-

wards more and more quickly, pass over to the new truth. Thus the number of men who accept the new truth becomes greater and greater, and the truth becomes more and more comprehensible.

And thus more confidence is aroused in the remainder who are at a less advanced stage of capacity for understanding the truth. And it becomes easier for them to grasp it, and an increasing number accept it.

And so the movement goes on more and more quickly, and on an ever increasing scale, like a snow-ball, till at last a public opinion in harmony with the new truth is created, and then the whole mass of men is carried over all at once by its momentum to the new truth and establishes a new social order in accordance with it.

Those men who accept a new truth when it has gained a certain degree of acceptance, always pass over all at once in masses. They are like the ballast with which every ship is always loaded, at once to keep it upright and enable it to sail properly. If there were no ballast the ship would not be low enough in the water, and would shift its position at the slightest change in its conditions. This ballast, which strikes one at first as superfluous and even as hindering the progress of the vessel, is really indispensable to its good navigation.

It is the same with the mass of mankind,

who, not individually, but always in a mass, under the influence of a new social idea pass all at once from one organisation of life to another. This mass always hinders, by its inertia, frequent and rapid revolutions in the social order which have not been sufficiently proved by human experience. And it delays every truth a long while till it has stood the test of prolonged struggles, and has thoroughly permeated the consciousness of humanity.

And that is why it is a mistake to say that because only a very small minority of men has assimilated Christianity in eighteen centuries, it must take many times as many centuries for all mankind to assimilate it, and that since that time is so far off, we who live in the present need not even think about it. It is a mistake because the men at a lower stage of culture, the men and the nations who are represented as the obstacle to the realisation of the Christian order of life, are the very people who always pass over in masses all at once to any truth that has once been recognised by public opinion.

And therefore the transformation of human life, through which men in power will renounce it, and there will be none anxious to take their place, will not come only by all men consciously and separately assimilating the Christian conception of life. It will come when a Christian public opinion has arisen,

so definite and easily comprehensible as to reach the whole of the inert mass, which is not able to attain truth by its own intuition, and therefore is always under the sway of public opinion.

Public opinion arises spontaneously and spreads for hundreds and thousands of years, but it has the power of working on men by infection, and with great rapidity gains a hold on great numbers of men. "But," say the champions of the existing order, "even if it is true that public opinion, when it has attained a certain degree of definiteness and precision, can convert the inert mass of men outside the Christian world—the non-Christian races—as well as the coarse and depraved who are living in its midst, what proofs have we that this Christian public opinion has arisen and is able to replace force and render it unnecessary?"

We must not give up force by which the existing order is maintained, and by relying on the vague and impalpable influence of public opinion expose Christians to the risk of being pillaged, murdered, and outraged in every way by the savages inside and outside of civilised society.

"Since even supported by the use of force, we can hardly control the non-Christian elements which are always ready to pour down on us and to destroy all that has been gained by civilisation, is it likely that public opinion

could take the place of force and render us secure? And besides, how are we to find the moment when public opinion has become strong enough to be able to replace the use of force? To reject the use of force and trust to public opinion to defend us would be as insane as to remove all weapons of defence in a menagerie, and then to let loose all the lions and tigers, relying on the fact that the animals seemed peaceable when kept in their cages, and held in check by red-hot irons. And therefore people in power, who have been put in positions of authority by fate or by God, have not the right to run the risk, ruining all that has been gained by civilisation, just because they want to try an experiment to see whether public opinion is, or is not able to replace the protection given by authority."

A French writer, forgotten now, Alphonse Karr, said somewhere, trying to show the impossibility of doing away with the death penalty: "Que messieurs les assassins commencent par nous donner l'exemple." Often have I heard this *bon mot* repeated by men who thought that these words were a witty and convincing argument against the abolition of capital punishment. And yet all the erroneousness of the argument of those who consider that governments cannot give up the use of force till all people are capable of doing the same, could not be more clearly expressed than it is in that epigram.

"Let the murderers," say the champions of state violence, "set us the example by giving up murder and then we will give it up." But the murderers say just the same, only with much more right. They say: "Let those who have undertaken to teach us and guide us, set us the example of giving up legal murder, and then we will imitate them." And they say this, not as a jest, but seriously, because it is the actual state of the case.

"We cannot give up the use of violence because we are surrounded by violent ruffians." Nothing in our days hinders the progress of humanity and the establishment of the organisation corresponding to its present development, more than this false reasoning. Those in authority are convinced that men are only guided and only progress through the use of force, and therefore they confidently make use of it to support the existing organisation. The existing order is maintained, not by force, but by public opinion, the action of which is disturbed by the use of force. So that the effect of using force is to disturb and to weaken the very thing it tries to maintain.

Violence, even in the most favourable case, when it is not used simply for some personal aims of those in power, always punishes under the one inelastic formula of the law what has long before been condemned

by public opinion. But there is this difference : that while public opinion censures and condemns all the acts opposed to the moral law, including the most varied cases in its reprobation, the law which rests on violence only condemns and punishes a certain very limited range of acts, and by so doing seems to justify all other acts of the same kind which do not come under its scope.

Public opinion ever since the time of Moses has regarded covetousness, profligacy, and cruelty as wrong, and censured them accordingly. And it condemns every kind of manifestation of covetousness, not only the appropriation of the property of others by force or fraud, or trickery, but even the cruel abuse of wealth ; it condemns every form of profligacy, whether with concubine, slave, divorced woman, or even one's own wife ; it condemns every kind of cruelty, whether shown in blows, in ill-treatment, or in murder, not only of men but even of animals. The law resting on force only punishes certain forms of covetousness, such as robbery and swindling, certain forms of profligacy and cruelty, such as conjugal infidelity, murder and wounding. And in this way it seems to countenance all the manifestations of covetousness, profligacy and cruelty which do not come under its narrow definition.

But besides corrupting public opinion the use of force leads men to the fatal conviction

that they progress, not through the spiritual impulse which impels them to the attainment of truth and its realisation in life, and which constitutes the only source of every progressive movement of humanity, but by means of violence, the very force which, far from leading men to truth, always carries them further away from it. This is a fatal error, because it leads men to neglect the chief force underlying their life—their spiritual activity—and to turn all their attention and energy to the use of violence, which is superficial, sluggish, and most generally pernicious in its action.

They make the same mistake as men who, trying to set a steam-engine in motion, should turn its wheels round with their hands, not suspecting that the underlying cause of its movement was the expansion of the steam, and not the motion of the wheels. By turning the wheels by hand and by levers they could only produce a semblance of movement, and meantime they would be wrenching the wheels and so preventing their being fit for real movement.

That is just what people are doing who think to make men advance by means of external force.

They say that the Christian life cannot be established without the use of violence because there are savage races outside the pale of Christian societies in Africa, and in

Asia (there are some who even represent the Chinese as a danger to civilisation), and that in the midst of Christian societies there are savage, corrupt and, according to the new theory of heredity, congenital criminals. And violence, they say, is necessary to keep savages and criminals from annihilating our civilisation.

But these savages within and without Christian society, who are such a terror to us, have never been subjugated by violence, and are not subjugated by it now. Nations have never subjugated other nations by violence alone. If a nation which subjugated another was on a lower level of civilisation, it has never happened that it succeeded in introducing its organisation of life by violence. On the contrary it was always forced to adopt the organisation of life existing in the conquered nation. If ever any of the nations conquered by force have been really subjugated, or even nearly so, it has always been by the action of public opinion, and never by violence, which only tends to drive a people to further rebellion.

When whole nations have been subjugated by a new religion, and have become Christian or Mahometan, such a conversion has never been brought about because the authorities made it obligatory (on the contrary, violence has much oftener acted in the opposite direction), but because public opinion made

such a change inevitable. Nations, on the contrary, who have been driven by force to accept the faith of their conquerors have always remained antagonistic to it.

It is just the same with the savage elements existing in the midst of our civilised societies. Neither the increased nor the diminished severity of punishment, nor the modifications of prisons, nor the increase of police will increase or diminish the number of criminals. Their number will only be diminished by the change of the moral standard of society. No severities could put an end to duels and vendettas in certain districts. In spite of the number of Tcherkesses executed for robbery, they continue to be robbers from their youth up, for no maiden will marry a Tcherkess youth till he has given proof of his bravery by carrying off a horse, or at least a sheep. If men cease to fight duels, and the Tcherkesses cease to be robbers, it will not be from fear of punishment (indeed that invests the crime with additional charm for youth), but through a change in the moral standard of public opinion. It is the same with all other crimes. Force can never suppress what is sanctioned by public opinion. On the contrary, public opinion need only be in direct opposition to force to neutralise the whole effect of the use of force. It has always been so and always will be in every case of martyrdom.

What would happen if force were not used against hostile nations, and the criminal elements of society, we do not know. But we do know by prolonged experience that neither enemies nor criminals have been successfully suppressed by force.

And indeed how could nations be subjugated by violence who are led by their whole education, their traditions and even their religion to see the loftiest virtue in warring with their oppressors and fighting for freedom? And how are we to suppress by force acts committed in the midst of our society which are regarded as crimes by the government and as daring exploits by the people?

To exterminate such nations and such criminals by violence is possible, and indeed is done, but to subdue them is impossible.

The sole guide which directs men and nations has always been and is the unseen, intangible, underlying force, the resultant of all the spiritual forces of a certain people, or of all humanity, which finds its outward expression in public opinion.

The use of violence only weakens this force, hinders it and corrupts it, and tries to replace it by another which, far from being conducive to the progress of humanity, is detrimental to it.

To bring under the sway of Christianity all the savage nations outside the pale of the Christian world—all the Zulus, Manchus,

and Chinese, whom many regard as savages—and the savages who live in our midst, there is only *one means*. That means is the propagation among these nations of the Christian ideal of society, which can only be realised by a Christian life, Christian actions, and Christian examples. And meanwhile, though this is the *one only means* of gaining a hold over the people who have remained non-Christian, the men of our day set to work in the directly opposite fashion to attain this result.

To bring under the sway of Christianity savage nations who do not attack us and whom we have therefore no excuse for oppressing, we ought before all things to leave them in peace, and in case we need or wish to enter into closer relations with them, we ought only to influence them by Christian manners and Christian teaching, setting them the example of the Christian virtues of patience, meekness, endurance, purity, brotherhood, and love. Instead of that we begin by establishing among them new markets for our commerce, with the sole aim of our own profit; then we appropriate their lands, *i.e.* rob them; then we sell them spirits, tobacco, and opium, *i.e.* corrupt them; then we establish our morals among them, teach them the use of violence and new methods of destruction, *i.e.* we teach them nothing but the animal law of strife, below which man cannot sink, and we

do all we can to conceal from them all that is Christian in us. After this we send some dozens of missionaries prating to them of the hypocritical absurdities of the church, and then quote the failure of our efforts to turn the heathen to Christianity as an incontrovertible proof of the impossibility of applying the truths of Christianity in practical life.

It is just the same with the so-called criminals living in our midst. To bring these people under the sway of Christianity there is *one only means*, that is, the Christian social ideal, which can only be realised among them by true Christian teaching and supported by a true example of the Christian life. And to preach this Christian truth and to support it by Christian example we set up among them prisons, guillotines, gallows, preparations for murder; we diffuse among the common herd idolatrous superstitions to stupefy them; we sell them spirits, tobacco, and opium to brutalise them; we even organise legalised prostitution; we give land to those who do not need it; we make a display of senseless luxury in the midst of suffering poverty; we destroy the possibility of anything like a Christian public opinion, and studiously try to suppress what Christian public opinion is existing. And then, after having ourselves assiduously corrupted men, we shut them up like wild beasts in places from which they cannot escape, and where

they become still more brutalised ; or else we kill them. And these very men whom we have corrupted and brutalised by every means, we bring forward as a proof that one cannot deal with criminals except by brute force.

We are just like ignorant doctors who put a man, recovering from illness by the force of nature, into the most unfavourable conditions of hygiene, and dose him with the most deleterious drugs, and then assert triumphantly that their hygiene and their drugs saved his life, when the patient would have been well long before if they had left him alone.

Violence, which is held up as the means of supporting the Christian organisation of life, not only fails to produce that effect, it even hinders the social organisation of life from being what it might and ought to be. The social organisation is as good as it is not as a result of force, but in spite of it.

And therefore the champions of the existing order are mistaken in arguing that since, even with the aid of force, the bad and non-Christian elements of humanity can hardly be kept from attacking us, the abolition of the use of force and the substitution of public opinion for it would leave humanity quite unprotected.

They are mistaken because force does not protect humanity, but on the contrary deprives it of the only possible means of really

protecting itself—that is, the establishment and diffusion of a Christian public opinion. Only by the suppression of violence will a Christian public opinion cease to be corrupted, and be enabled to be diffused without hindrance, and men will then turn their efforts in the spiritual direction by which alone they can advance.

“But how are we to cast off the visible, tangible protection of an armed policeman, and trust to something so intangible as public opinion? Does it yet exist? Moreover, the condition of things in which we are living now, we know, good or bad; we know its shortcomings and are used to it; we know what to do and how to behave under present conditions. But what will happen when we give it up and trust ourselves to something invisible and intangible, and altogether unknown?”

The unknown world on which they are entering in renouncing their habitual ways of life appears itself as dreadful to them. It is all very well to dread the unknown when our habitual position is sound and secure. But our position is so far from being secure that we know, beyond all doubt, that we are standing on the brink of a precipice.

If we must be afraid let us be afraid of what is really alarming, and not what we imagine as alarming.

Fearing to make the effort to detach

ourselves from our perilous position because the future is not fully clear to us, we are like passengers in a foundering ship who, through being afraid to trust themselves to the boat which would carry them to the shore, shut themselves up in the cabin and refuse to come out of it ; or like sheep which, terrified by their barn being on fire, huddle in a corner and do not go out of the wide-open door.

We are standing on the threshold of the murderous war of social revolution, terrific in its miseries, beside which, as those who are preparing it tell us, the horrors of 1793 will be child's play. And can we talk of the danger threatening us from the warriors of Dahomey, the Zulus, and such, who live so far away and are not dreaming of attacking us, and from some thousands of swindlers, thieves and murderers, brutalised and corrupted by ourselves, whose number is in no way lessened by all our sentences, prisons and executions ?

Moreover this dread of the suppression of the visible protection of the policeman is essentially a sentiment of townspeople—that is, of people who are living in abnormal and artificial conditions. People living in natural conditions of life, not in towns, but in the midst of nature, and carrying on the struggle with nature, live without this protection and know how little force can protect us from the

real dangers with which we are surrounded. There is something sickly in this dread, which is essentially dependent on the artificial conditions in which many of us live and have been brought up.

A doctor, a specialist in insanity, told a story that one summer-day, when he was leaving the asylum, the lunatics accompanied him to the street-door. "Come for a walk in the town with me!" the doctor suggested to them. The lunatics agreed, and a small band followed the doctor. But the further they proceeded along the street where healthy people were freely moving about, the more timid they became, and they pressed closer and closer to the doctor, hindering him from walking. At last they all began to beg him to take them back to the asylum, to their meaningless but customary way of life, to their keepers, to blows, strait waistcoats, and solitary cells.

This is just how men of to-day huddle in terror and draw back to their irrational manner of life, their factories, law-courts, prisons, executions and wars, when Christianity calls them to liberty, to the free, rational life of the future, coming age.

People ask, "How will our security be guaranteed when the existing organisation is suppressed? What precisely will the new organisation be that is to replace it? So long as we do not know precisely how our

life will be organised, we will not stir a step forward."

An explorer going to an unknown country might as well ask for a detailed map of the country before he would start.

If a man, before he passed from one stage to another, could know his future life in full detail, he would have nothing to live for. It is the same with the life of humanity. If it had a programme of the life which awaited it before entering a new stage, it would be the surest sign that it was not living, nor advancing, but simply rotating in the same place.

The conditions of the new order of life cannot be known by us because we have to create them by our own labours. That is all that life is—to learn the unknown, and to adapt our actions to this new knowledge.

That is the life of each individual man, and that is the life of human societies and of humanity.

CHAPTER XI

*THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF LIFE HAS ALREADY
ARISEN IN OUR SOCIETY, AND WILL INFALLIBLY
PUT AN END TO THE PRESENT ORGANISATION OF
OUR LIFE BASED ON FORCE—WHEN THAT WILL
BE*

The condition and organisation of our society are terrible, but they rest only on public opinion, and can be destroyed by it—Already violence is regarded from a different point of view; the number of those who are ready to serve the government is diminishing; and even the servants of government are ashamed of their position, and so often do not perform their duties—These facts are all signs of the rise of a public opinion which, continually growing, will lead to no one being willing to enter government service—Moreover, it becomes more and more evident that those offices are of no practical use—Men already begin to understand the futility of all institutions based on violence, and if a few already understand it, all will one day understand it—The day of deliverance is unknown, but it depends on men themselves, on how far each man lives according to the light that is in him.

THE position of Christian humanity with its prisons, galleys, gibbets, its factories and accumulation of capital, its taxes, churches, gin-palaces, licensed brothels, its ever-increasing armament and its millions of brutalised men, ready, like chained dogs, to attack anyone against whom their master

incites them, would be terrible indeed if it were the product of violence, but it is pre-eminently the product of public opinion. And what has been established by public opinion can be destroyed by public opinion—and, indeed, is being destroyed by public opinion.

Money lavished by hundreds of millions, tens of millions of disciplined troops, weapons of astounding destructive power, all organisation carried to the highest point of perfection, a whole army of men charged with the task of deluding and hypnotising the people, and all this by means of electricity which annihilates distance, under the direct control of men who regard such an organisation of society not only as necessary for profit, but even for self-preservation, and therefore exert every effort of their ingenuity to preserve it—what an invincible power it would seem! And yet we need only imagine for a moment what will really inevitably come to pass—that is, the Christian social standard replacing the heathen social standard and established with the same power and universality, and the majority of men as much ashamed of taking any part in violence or in profiting by it as they are to-day of thieving, swindling, begging and cowardice—and at once we see the whole of this complex and seemingly powerful organisation of society falls into ruins of itself without a struggle.

And to bring this to pass, nothing new need be brought before men's minds. Only let the mist, which veils from men's eyes the true meaning of certain acts of violence, pass away, and the Christian public opinion which is springing up would overpower the extinct public opinion which permitted and justified acts of violence. People need only come to be as much ashamed to do deeds of violence, to assist in them or to profit by them, as they now are of being, or being reputed, a swindler, a thief, a coward, or a beggar. And already this change is beginning to take place. We do not notice it, just as we do not notice the movement of the earth, because we are moved together with everything around us.

It is true that the organisation of society remains in its principal features just as much an organisation based on violence as it was one thousand years ago, and even in some respects, especially in the preparation for war and in war itself, it appears still more brutal. But the rising Christian ideal, which must at a certain stage of development replace the heathen ideal of life, already makes its influence felt. A dead tree stands apparently as firmly as ever—it may even seem firmer because it is harder—but it is rotten at the core, and soon must fall. It is just so with the present order of society, based on force. The external aspect is unchanged. There is the same division of oppressors and oppressed,

but their view of the significance and dignity of their respective positions is no longer what it once was.

The oppressors—that is, those who take part in government—and those who profit by oppression—that is, the rich—no longer imagine, as they once did, that they are the elect of the world, and that they constitute the ideal of human happiness and greatness, to attain which was once the highest aim of the oppressed.

Very often now it is not the oppressed who strive to attain the position of the oppressors, and try to imitate them, but, on the contrary, the oppressors who voluntarily abandon the advantages of their position, prefer the condition of the oppressed, and try to resemble them in the simplicity of their life.

Not to speak of the duties and occupations now openly despised, such as that of spy, agent of secret police, money-lender, and publican, there are a great number of professions formerly regarded as honourable, such as those of police officials, courtiers, judges, and administrative functionaries, clergymen, military officers, speculators and bankers, which are no longer considered desirable positions by every one, and are even despised by a special circle of the most respected people. There are already men who voluntarily abandon these professions which were once reckoned irreproachable,

and prefer less lucrative callings which are in no way connected with the use of force.

And there are even rich men who, not through religious sentiment, but simply through special sensitiveness to the social standard that is springing up, relinquish their inherited property, believing that a man can only justly consume what he has gained by his own labour.

The position of a government official or of a rich man is no longer, as it once was, and still is among non-Christian peoples, regarded as necessarily honourable and deserving of respect, and under the special blessing of God. The most delicate and moral people (they are generally also the most cultivated) avoid such positions and prefer more humble callings that are not dependent on the use of force.

The best of our young people at the age when they are still uncorrupted by life and are choosing a career, prefer the calling of doctor, engineer, teacher, artist, writer, or even that of simple farmer living on his own labour, to legal, administrative, clerical and military positions in the pay of government, or to an idle existence living on their incomes.

Monuments and memorials in these days are mostly not erected in honour of government dignitaries, or generals, or still less of rich men, but rather of artists, men of science and inventors, persons who have nothing in

common with the government, and often have even been in conflict with it. They are the men whose praises are celebrated in poetry, who are honoured by sculpture and received with triumphant jubilations.

The best men of our day are all striving for such places of honour. Consequently the class from which the wealthy and the government officials are drawn grows less in number and lower in intelligence and education, and still more in moral qualities. So that now-a-days the wealthy class, and the men at the head of government, do not constitute, as they did in former days, the *élite* of society; on the contrary, they are inferior to the middle class.

In Russia and Turkey as in America and France, however often the government change its officials, the majority of them are self-seeking and corrupt, of so low a moral standard that they do not even come up to the elementary requirements of common honesty expected by the government. One may often now-a-days hear from persons in authority the naïve complaint that the best people are always, by some strange—as it seems to them—fatality, to be found in the camp of the opposition. As though men were to complain that those who accepted the office of hangman were—by some strange fatality—all persons of very little refinement or beauty of character.

The most cultivated and refined people of our society are not now-a-days to be found among the very rich, as used formerly to be the rule. The rich are mostly coarse money-grubbers, absorbed only in increasing their hoard, generally by dishonest means, or else the degenerate heirs of such money-grubbers, who far from playing any prominent part in society are mostly treated with general contempt.

And besides the fact that the class from which the servants of government and the wealthy are drawn grows less in number and lower in calibre, they no longer themselves attach the same importance to their positions as they once did ; often they are ashamed of the ignominy of their calling and do not perform the duties they are bound to perform in their position. Kings and emperors scarcely govern at all, they scarcely ever decide upon an internal reform or a new departure in foreign politics. They mostly leave the decision of such questions to government institutions or to public opinion. All their duties are reduced to representing the unity and majesty of government. And even this duty they perform less and less successfully. The majority of them do not keep up their old unapproachable majesty, but become more and more democratised and even vulgarised, casting aside the external prestige that remained to them, and

thereby destroying the very thing it was their function to maintain.

It is just the same with the army. Military officers of the highest rank, instead of encouraging in their soldiers the brutality and ferocity necessary for their work, diffuse education among the soldiers, inculcate humanity, and often even themselves share the socialistic ideas of the masses and denounce war. In the last plots against the Russian Government many of the conspirators were in the army. And the number of the disaffected in the army is always increasing. And it often happens (there was a case, indeed, within the last few days) that when called upon to quell disturbances they refuse to fire upon the people. Military exploits are openly reprobated by the military themselves and are often the subject of jests among them.

It is the same with judges and public prosecutors. The judges, whose duty it is to judge and condemn criminals, conduct the proceedings so as to whitewash them as far as possible. So that the Russian Government, to procure the condemnation of those whom they want to punish, never entrust them to the ordinary tribunals, but have them tried before a court-martial which is only a parody of justice. The prosecutors themselves often refuse to proceed, and even when they do proceed, often in spite of the

law, really defend those they ought to be accusing. The learned jurists, whose business it is to justify the violence of authority, are more and more disposed to deny the right of punishment and to replace it by theories of irresponsibility and even of moral insanity, proposing to deal with those they call criminals by medical treatment only.

Jailers and overseers of galleys generally become the champions of those whom they ought to torture. Police officers and detectives are continually assisting the escape of those they ought to arrest. The clergy preach tolerance, and even sometimes condemn the use of force, and the more educated among them try in their sermons to avoid the very deception which is the basis of their position and which it is their duty to support. Executioners refuse to perform their functions, so that in Russia the death-penalty cannot be carried out for want of executioners. And in spite of all the advantages bestowed on these men who are selected from convicts, there is a constantly diminishing number of volunteers for the post. Governors, police officials, tax-collectors often have compassion on the people and try to find pretexts for not collecting the tax from them. The rich are not at ease in spending their wealth only on themselves, and lavish it on works of public utility. Landowners build schools and hospitals on

their property, and some even give up the ownership of their land and transfer it to the cultivators, or establish communities upon it. Millowners and manufacturers build hospitals, schools, savings banks, asylums, and dwellings for their workpeople. Some of them form co-operative associations in which they have shares on the same terms as the others. Capitalists expend a part of their capital on educational, artistic, philanthropic and other public institutions. And many who are not equal to parting with their wealth in their lifetime, leave it in their wills to public institutions.

All these phenomena might seem to be mere exceptions, except that they can all be referred to one common cause. Just as one might fancy the first leaves on the budding trees in April were exceptional if we did not know that they all have a common cause, the spring, and that if we see the branches on some trees shooting and turning green, it is certain that it will soon be so with all: so it is with the manifestation of the Christian standard of opinion on force and all that is based on force. If this standard already influences some, the most impressionable, and impels each in his own sphere to abandon advantages based on use of force, then its influence will extend further and further till it transforms the whole order of men's actions and puts it into accord with

the Christian ideal, which is already a living force in the vanguard of humanity.

And if there are now rulers who do not decide on any step on their own authority, who try to be as unlike monarchs and as like plain mortals as possible, who state their readiness to give up their prerogatives and become simply the first citizens of a republic ; if there are already soldiers who realise all the sin and harm of war, and are not willing to fire on men either of their own or a foreign country ; judges and prosecutors who do not like to try and to condemn criminals ; priests who abjure deception ; tax-gatherers who try to perform as little as they can of their duties, and rich men renouncing their wealth —then the same thing will inevitably happen to other rulers, other soldiers, other judges, priests, tax-gatherers, and rich men. And when there are no longer men willing to fill these offices, these offices themselves will disappear too.

But this is not the only way in which public opinion is leading men to the abolition of the prevailing order and the substitution of a new order. As the positions based on the rule of force become less attractive and fewer men are found willing to fill them, the more will their uselessness be apparent.

Everywhere throughout the Christian world are found the same rulers and governments, the same armies, the same law-courts,

the same tax-gatherers, the same priests, the same rich men, landowners, manufacturers and capitalists, as ever ; but the attitude of the world to them, and their attitude to themselves, is altogether changed.

The same sovereigns have still the same audiences and interviews, hunts and banquets, and balls and uniforms ; there are the same diplomats and the same deliberations on alliances and wars ; there are still the same parliaments, with the same debates on the Eastern question and Africa, on treaties and violations of treaties, and Home Rule and the Eight Hours day ; and one set of ministers replacing another in the same way, and the same speeches and the same incidents : but for men who observe how one newspaper article has more effect on the position of affairs than dozens of royal audiences or parliamentary sessions, it becomes more and more evident that these audiences and interviews, and debates in parliaments, do not direct the course of affairs ; but something independent of all that, which cannot be concentrated in one place.

The same generals and officers and soldiers, and cannons and fortresses, and reviews and manœuvres ; but no war breaks out. One year—ten, twenty years pass by. And it becomes less and less possible to rely on the army for the pacification of riots, and more and more evident, consequently, that generals

and officers, and soldiers are only figures in solemn processions—objects of amusement for governments—a sort of immense—and far too expensive—*corps de ballet*.

The same lawyers and judges, and the same assizes ; but it becomes more and more evident that the civil courts decide cases on the most diverse grounds, but regardless of justice, and that criminal trials are quite senseless because the punishments do not attain the objects aimed at by the judges themselves. These institutions therefore serve no other purpose than to provide a means of livelihood for men who are not capable of doing anything more useful.

The same priests and archbishops and churches and synods, but it becomes more and more evident that they have long ago ceased to believe in what they preach, and therefore they can convince no one of the necessity of believing what they don't believe themselves.

The same tax-collectors, but they are less and less capable of taking men's property from them by force, and it becomes more and more evident that people can collect all that is necessary by voluntary subscription without their aid.

The same rich men, but it becomes more and more evident that they can only be of use by ceasing to administer their property in person and giving up to society the whole, or at least a part, of their wealth.

And when all this has become absolutely evident to every one, it will be natural for men to ask themselves: "But why should we keep and maintain all these kings, emperors, presidents and members of all sorts of senates and ministries, since nothing comes of all their debates and audiences? Wouldn't it be better, as some humourist suggested, to make a queen of india-rubber?"

And what good to us are these armies with their generals, and bands, and horses and drums? And what need is there of them when there is no war, and no one wants to make war; and if there were a war, other nations would not let us gain any advantage from it; while the soldiers refuse to fire on their fellow-countrymen?

And what is the use of these lawyers and judges who don't decide civil cases with justice and recognise themselves the uselessness of punishments in criminal cases?

And what is the use of tax-collectors who collect the taxes unwillingly, when it is easy to raise all that is wanted without them?

What is the use of the clergy who don't believe in what they preach?

And what is the use of capital in the hands of private persons when it can only be of use as the property of all?

And when once people have asked themselves these questions they cannot help

coming to some decision and ceasing to support all these institutions which are no longer of use.

But even before those who support these institutions decide to abolish them, the men who occupy these positions will be reduced to the necessity of throwing them up.

Public opinion more and more condemns the use of force and therefore men are less and less willing to fill positions which rest on the use of force ; and, if they do occupy them, are less and less able to make use of force in them. And hence they must become more and more superfluous.

I once took part in Moscow in a religious meeting which used to take place generally in the week after Easter, near the church in the Ohotny Row. A little knot of some twenty men were collected together on the pavement, engaged in serious religious discussion. At the same time there was a kind of concert going on in the buildings of the Court Club in the same street, and a police officer, noticing the little group collected near the church, sent a mounted policeman to disperse it. It was absolutely unnecessary for the officer to disperse it. A group of twenty men was no obstruction to anyone ; but he had been standing there the whole morning, and he wanted to do something. The policeman, a young fellow, with a resolute flourish of his right arm and a clink

of his sabre, came up to us and commanded us severely : " Move on ! what's this meeting about ? " Every one looked at the policeman, and one of the speakers, a quiet man in a peasant's dress, answered with a calm and gracious air : " We are speaking of serious matters and there is no need for us to move on ; you would do better, young man, to get off your horse and listen. It might do you good ; " and turning round he continued his discourse. The policeman turned his horse and went off without a word.

That is just what should be done in all cases of violence.

The officer was bored, he had nothing to do. He had been put, poor fellow, in a position in which he had no choice but to give orders. He was shut off all human existence ; he could do nothing but superintend and give orders, and give orders and superintend, though his superintendence and his orders served no useful purpose whatever. And this is the position in which all these unlucky rulers, ministers, members of parliament, governors, generals, officers, archbishops, priests, and even rich men find themselves to some extent already, and will find themselves altogether as time goes on. They can do nothing but give orders, and they give orders and send their messengers, as the officer sent the policeman, to interfere with people. And because the people they

hinder turn to them and request them not to interfere, they fancy they are very useful indeed.

But the time will come and is coming when it will be perfectly evident to every one that they are not of any use at all, and only a hindrance, and those whom they interfere with will say gently and quietly to them, like my friend in the street-meeting: "Pray don't interfere with us." And all the messengers, and those who send them too, will be obliged to follow this good advice: that is to say, will leave off galloping about, with their arms akimbo, interfering with people; and, getting off their horses and removing their spurs, will listen to what is being said, and, mixing with others, will take their place with them in some real human work.

The time will come and is inevitably coming when all institutions based on force will disappear through their uselessness, stupidity, and even inconvenience becoming obvious to all.

The time must come when the men of our modern world who fill offices based upon violence will find themselves in the position of the emperor in Andersen's tale of "The Emperor's New Clothes," when the child, seeing the emperor undressed, cried in all simplicity: "Look, he is naked!" And then all the rest, who had seen him and said nothing, could not help recognising it too.

The story is that there was once an emperor very fond of new clothes. And to him came two tailors, who promised to make him some extraordinary clothes. The emperor engages them and they begin to sew at them, but they explain that the clothes have the extraordinary property of remaining invisible to anyone who is unfit for his position. The courtiers come to look at the tailor's work and see nothing, for the men are plying their needles in empty space. But remembering the extraordinary property of the clothes, they all declare that they see them and are loud in their admiration. The emperor does the same himself. The day of the procession comes in which the emperor is to go out in his new clothes. The emperor undresses and puts on his new clothes—that is to say, remains naked—and naked he walks through the town. But remembering the magic property of the clothes, no one ventures to say that he has nothing on till a little child cries out: "Look, he is naked!"

This will be exactly the situation of all who continue through inertia to fill offices which have long become useless, directly someone who has no interest in concealing their uselessness exclaims in all simplicity: "But these people have been of no use to anyone for a long time past!"

The condition of Christian humanity with

its fortresses, cannons, dynamite guns, torpedoes, prisons, gallows, churches, factories, customs offices, and palaces is really terrible. But still cannons and guns will not fire themselves, prisons will not shut men up of themselves, gallows will not hang them, churches will not delude them, nor customs offices hinder them, and palaces and factories are not built nor kept up of themselves. All those things are the work of men. If men come to understand that they ought not to do these things, then they will cease to be. And already they are beginning to understand it. Though all do not understand it yet, the advanced guard understand and the rest will follow them. And the advanced guard cannot cease to understand what they have once understood ; and what they understand the rest not only can, but must inevitably understand hereafter.

So that the prophecy that the time will come when men will be taught of God, will learn war no more, will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into reaping-hooks—which means, translating it into our language, the fortresses, prisons, barracks, palaces and churches will remain empty, and all the gibbets and guns and cannons will be left unused—is no longer a dream, but the definite new form of life to which mankind is approaching with ever-increasing rapidity.

But when will it be ?

Eighteen hundred years ago to this question Christ answered that the end of the world (that is, of the pagan organisation of life) shall come when the tribulation of men is greater than it has ever been, and when the gospel of the Kingdom of God—that is, the possibility of a new organisation of life—shall be preached in the world unto all nations. (Matthew xxiv. 3-28.) But of that day and hour knoweth no man, but the Father only (Matthew xxiv. 3-6), said Christ. For it may come any time, in such an hour as ye think not.

To the question as to when this hour cometh Christ answers that we cannot know ; but just because we cannot know when that hour is coming we ought to be always ready to meet it, just as the master ought to watch who guards his house from thieves, as the virgins ought to watch with lamps alight for the bridegroom, and, further, we ought to work with all the powers given us to bring that hour to pass, as the servants ought to work with the talents entrusted to them. (Matthew xxiv. 43 and xxvi. 13, 14-30.)

And there could be no answer but this one. Men cannot know when the day and the hour of the Kingdom of God will come, because its coming depends on themselves alone.

The answer is like that of the wise man

who, when asked whether it was far to the town, answered "Walk!"

How can we tell whether it is far to the goal which humanity is approaching when we do not know how men are going towards it, while it depends on them whether they go or do not go, stand still, slacken their pace or hasten it?

All we can know is what we who make up mankind ought to do, and not to do, to bring about the coming of the Kingdom of God. And that we all know. And we need only each begin to do what we ought to do, we need only each live with all the light that is in us, to bring about at once the promised Kingdom of God, to which every man's heart is yearning.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

*REPENT YE, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
IS AT HAND*

1. Chance meeting with a train, carrying soldiers to restore order among the famishing peasants—Reason of the expedition—How the decisions of the higher authorities are enforced in cases of insubordination on part of the peasants—What happened at Orel, as an example of how the rights of the propertied classes are maintained by murder and torture—All the privileges of the wealthy are based on similar acts of violence.
2. The elements that made up the force sent to Toula, and the conduct of the men composing it—How these men could carry out such acts—The explanation is not to be found in ignorance, conviction, cruelty, heartlessness, or want of moral sense—They do these things because they are necessary to support the existing order, which they consider it every man's duty to support—The basis of this conviction that the existing order is necessary and inevitable—In the upper classes this conviction is based on the advantages of the existing order for themselves—But what forces men of the lower to believe in the immutability of the existing order from which they derive no advantage, and which they aid in maintaining by acts contrary to their conscience?—This is the result of the lower classes being deluded by the upper, both as to the inevitability of existing order and the lawfulness of the acts of violence needed to maintain it—Deception in general—Special form of deception in regard to military service—Conscription.

3. How can men allow that murder is permissible while they preach principles of morality, and how can they allow of the existence in their midst of a military organisation of physical force which is a constant menace to public security?—It is only allowed by the upper classes who profit by this organisation, because their privileges are maintained by it—The upper classes allow it, and the lower classes carry it into effect in spite of their consciousness of the immorality of the deeds of violence, the more readily because through the arrangements of the government the moral responsibility for such deeds is divided among a great number of participants in it, and every one throws the responsibility on some one else—Moreover, the sense of moral responsibility is lost through the delusion of inequality, and the consequent intoxication of power on the part of superiors, and servility on the part of inferiors—The condition of these men, acting against the dictates of their conscience, is like that of hypnotised subjects acting by suggestion—The difference between this obedience to government suggestion, and obedience to public opinion, and to the guidance of men of a higher moral sense—The existing order of society, which is the result of an extinct public opinion and is inconsistent with the already existing public opinion of the future, is only maintained by the stupefaction of the conscience, produced spontaneously by self-interest in the upper classes and through hypnotising in the lower classes—The conscience or the common sense of such men may awaken, and there are examples of its sudden awakening so that one can never be sure of the deeds of violence they are prepared for—It depends entirely on the point which the sense of the unlawfulness of acts of violence has reached, and this sense may spontaneously awaken in men, or may be reawakened by the influence of men of more conscience.
4. Everything depends on the strength of the consciousness of Christian truths in each individual man—The leading men of modern times, however, do not think it necessary to preach or practise the truths of Christianity, but regard the modification of the external conditions of existence within the limit imposed by governments as sufficient to reform the life of humanity—On this scientific theory of hypocrisy, which has replaced the hypocrisy of religion, men of the wealthy classes base their justification of their position—Through this

hypocrisy they can enjoy the exclusive privileges of their position by force and fraud, and still pretend to be Christians to one another and be easy in their minds—This hypocrisy allows men who preach Christianity to take part in institutions based on violence—No external reformation of life will render it less miserable—Its misery the result of disunion caused by following lies, not the truth—Union only possible in truth—Hypocrisy hinders this union, since hypocrites conceal from themselves and others the truth they know—Hypocrisy turns all reforms of life to evil—Hypocrisy distorts the idea of good and evil, and so stands in the way of the progress of men towards perfection—Undisguised criminals and malefactors do less harm than those who live by legalised violence, disguised by hypocrisy—All men feel the iniquity of our life, and would long ago have transformed it if it had not been dissimulated by hypocrisy—But seem to have reached the extreme limits of hypocrisy, and we need only make an effort of conscience to awaken as from a nightmare to a different reality.

5. Can man make this effort?—According to the hypocritical theory of the day, man is not free to transform his life—Man is not free in his actions, but he is free to admit or to deny the truth he knows—When truth is once admitted, it becomes the basis of action—Man's threefold relation to truth—The reason of the apparent insolubility of the problem of free-will—Man's freedom consists in the recognition of the truth revealed to him. There is no other freedom—Recognition of truth gives freedom, and shows the path along which, willingly or unwillingly by mankind, man must advance—The recognition of truth and real freedom enables man to share in the work of God, not as the slave but as the creator of life—Men need only make the effort to renounce all thought of bettering the external conditions of life and bend all their efforts to recognising and preaching the truth they know, to put an end to the existing miserable state of things, and to enter upon the kingdom of God so far as it is yet accessible to man—All that is needed is to make an end of lying and hypocrisy—But then what awaits us in the future?—What will happen to humanity if men follow the dictates of their conscience, and how can life go on with the conditions of civilised life to which we are accustomed?—All uneasiness on these points may be removed by the reflection that nothing

true and good can be destroyed by the realisation of truth, but will only be freed from the alloy of falsehood.

6. Our life has reached the extreme limit of misery and cannot be improved by any systems of organisation—All our life and all our institutions are quite meaningless—Are we doing what God wills of us by preserving our privileges and duties to government?—We are put in this position not because the world is so made and it is inevitable, but because we wish it to be so, because it is to the advantage of some of us—Our conscience is in opposition to our position and all our conduct, and the way out of the contradiction is to be found in the recognition of the Christian truth : Do not unto others what you would not they should do unto you—As our duties to self must be subordinated to our duties to others, so must our duties to others be subordinated to our duties to God—The only way of our position lies, if not in renouncing our position and our privileges, at least in recognising our sin and not justifying it nor disguising it—The only object of life is to learn the truth and to act on it.—Acceptance of the position and of state action deprives life of all object—It is God's will that we should serve Him in our life : that is, that we should bring about the greatest unity of all that has life, a unity only possible in truth.

I WAS finishing this book, which I had been working at for two years, when I happened on the 9th of September to be travelling by rail through the Governments of Toula and Riazan, where the peasants were starving last year and where the famine is even more severe now. At one of the railway stations my train passed an extra train which was taking a troop of soldiers under the conduct of the governor of the province, together with muskets, cartridges, and rods to flog and murder these same famishing peasants.

The punishment of flogging by way of carrying the decrees of the authorities into effect has been more and more frequently adopted of late in Russia, in spite of the fact that corporal punishment was abolished by law thirty years ago.

I had heard of this, I had even read in the newspapers of the fearful floggings which had been inflicted in Tchernigov, Tambov, Saratov, Astrakhan and Orel, and of those of which the governor of Nijni-Novgorod, General Baranov, had boasted. But I had never before happened to see men in the process of carrying out these punishments.

And here I saw the spectacle of good Russians, full of the Christian spirit, travelling with guns and rods to torture and kill their starving brethren. The reason for their expedition was as follows :

On one of the estates of a rich landowner the peasants had common rights on the forest, and, having always enjoyed these rights, regarded the forest as their own, or at least as theirs in common with the owner. The landowner wished to keep the forest entirely to himself and began to fell the trees. The peasants lodged a complaint. The judges in the first instance gave an unjust decision (I say unjust on the authority of the lawyer and governor who ought to understand the matter), and decided the case in favour of the landowner. All the later

decisions, even that of the senate, though they could see that the matter had been unjustly decided, confirmed the judgment and adjudged the forest to the landowner. He began to cut down the trees, but the peasants, unable to believe that such obvious injustice could be done them by the higher authorities, did not submit to the decision and drove away the men sent to cut down the trees, declaring that the forest belonged to them and they would go to the Tsar before they would let them cut it down.

The matter was referred to Petersburg, and the order was transmitted to the governor to carry the decision of the court into effect. The governor asked for a troop of soldiers. And here were the soldiers with bayonets and cartridges, and moreover a supply of rods, expressly prepared for the purpose and heaped up in one of the trucks, going to carry the decision of the higher authorities into effect.

The decisions of the higher authorities are carried into effect by means of murder, or torture, or threats of one or the other, according to whether they offer resistance or not.

In the first case if the peasants offer resistance the practice is in Russia, and it is the same everywhere where a state organisation and private property exist, as follows: The governor delivers an address in which he

demands submission. The excited crowd, generally deluded by their leaders, don't understand a word of what the representative of authority is saying in the pompous official language, and their excitement continues. Then the governor announces that if they do not submit and disperse, he will be obliged to have recourse to force. If the crowd does not disperse even on this, the governor gives the order to fire over the heads of the crowd. If the crowd does not even then disperse, the governor gives the order to fire straight into the crowd; the soldiers fire and the killed and wounded fall about the street. Then the crowd usually runs away in all directions, and the troops, at the governor's command, take those who are supposed to be the ringleaders and lead them off under escort. Then they pick up the dying, the wounded, and the dead, covered with blood, sometimes women and children among them. The dead they bury, and the wounded they carry to the hospital. Those whom they regard as the ringleaders they take to the town and have them tried by a special court-martial. And if they have had recourse to violence on their side, they are condemned to be hanged. And then the gallows is erected. And they solemnly strangle a few defenceless creatures. This is what has often been done in Russia, and is and must always be done where the social order is based on force.

But in the second case, when the peasants do submit, something quite special, peculiar to Russia, takes place. The governor arrives on the scene of action and delivers an harangue to the people, reproaching them for their insubordination, and either stations troops in the houses of the villages, where sometimes for a whole month the soldiers drain the resources of the peasants, or, contenting himself with threats, he mercifully takes leave of the people; or, what is the most frequent course, he announces that the ringleaders must be punished, and quite arbitrarily, without any trial, selects a certain number of men, regarded as ringleaders, and commands them to be flogged in his presence.

In order to give an idea of how such things are done I will describe a proceeding of the kind which took place in Orel, and received the full approval of the highest authorities.

This is what took place in Orel. Just as in the Toula province, a landlord here wanted to appropriate the property of the peasants, and just in the same way the peasants opposed it. The matter in dispute was a fall of water, which irrigated the peasants' fields, and which the landowner wanted to cut off and divert to turn his mill. The peasants rebelled against this being done. The landowner laid a complaint before the district commander, who illegally

(as was recognised later even by a legal decision) decided the matter in favour of the landowner, and allowed him to divert the watercourse. The landowner sent workmen to dig the conduit by which the water was to be let off to turn the mill. The peasants were indignant at this unjust decision, and sent their women to prevent the landowner's men from digging the conduit. The women went to the dykes, overturned the carts and drove away the men. The landowner made a complaint against the women for thus taking the law into their own hands. The district commander made out an order that from every house throughout the village one woman was to be taken and put in prison. The order was not easily executed. For in every household there were several women, and it was impossible to know which one was to be arrested. Consequently the police did not carry out the order. The landowner complained to the governor of the neglect on the part of the police, and the latter, without examining into the affair, gave the chief official of the police strict orders to carry out the instructions of the district commander without delay. The police official, in obedience to his superior, went to the village and with the insolence peculiar to Russian officials ordered his policemen to take one woman out of each house. But since there were more than one woman in

each house, and there was no knowing which one was sentenced to imprisonment, disputes and opposition arose. In spite of these disputes and opposition, however, the officer of police gave orders that some woman, whichever came first, should be taken from each household and led away to prison. The peasants began to defend their wives and mothers, would not let them go and beat the police and their officer. This was a fresh and terrible crime: resistance was offered to the authorities. A report of this new offence was sent to the town. And so this governor—precisely as the governor of Toulou was doing on that day—with a battalion of soldiers with guns and rods, hastily brought together by means of telegraphs and telephones and railways, proceeded by a special train to the scene of action, with a learned doctor whose duty it was to ensure the flogging being of an hygienic character. Herzen's prophecy of the modern Ghengis Khan with his telegrams is completely realised by this governor.

Before the town-hall of the district were the soldiery, a battalion of police with their revolvers slung round them with red cords, the persons of most importance among the peasants, and the culprits. A crowd of one thousand or more people were standing round. The governor on arriving stepped out of his carriage, delivered a prepared

harangue, and asked for the culprits and a bench. The latter demand was at first not understood. But a police constable whom the governor always took about with him, and who undertook to organise such executions—by no means exceptional in that province—explained that what was meant was a bench for flogging. A bench was brought as well as the rods, and then the executioners were summoned (the latter had been selected beforehand from some horse-stealers of the same village, as the soldiers refused the office). When everything was ready, the governor ordered the first of the twelve culprits pointed out by the landowner as the most guilty to come forward. The first to come forward was the head of a family, a man of forty, who had always stood up manfully for the rights of his class, and therefore was held in the greatest esteem by all the villagers. He was led to the bench, and stripped, and then ordered to lie down.

The peasant attempted to supplicate for mercy, but, seeing it was useless, he crossed himself and lay down. Two police constables hastened to hold him down. The learned doctor stood by, in readiness to give his aid and his medical science when they should be needed. The convicts spat into their hands, brandished the rods, and began to flog. It seemed, however, that the bench was too narrow, and it was difficult to keep the

victim writhing in torture upon it. Then the governor ordered them to bring another bench and to put a plank across them. Soldiers, with their hands raised to their caps, and respectful murmurs of "Yes, your Excellency," hasten obediently to carry out this order. Meanwhile the tortured man, half naked, pale and scowling, stood waiting, his eyes fixed on the ground and his teeth chattering. When another bench had been brought they again made him lie down, and the convicted thieves again began to flog him.

The victim's back and thighs and legs, and even his sides become more and more covered with scars and wheals, and at every blow there came the sound of the deep groans which he could no longer restrain. In the crowd standing round were heard the sobs of wives, mothers, children, the families of the tortured man and of all the others picked out for punishment.

The miserable governor, intoxicated with power, was counting the strokes on his fingers, and never left off smoking cigarettes, while several officious persons hastened on every opportunity to offer him a burning match to light them. When more than fifty strokes had been given, the peasant ceased to shriek and writhe, and the doctor, who had been educated in a government institution to serve his sovereign and his country with his scientific attainments, went up to the

victim, felt his pulse, listened to his heart and announced to the representative of authority that the man undergoing punishment had lost consciousness, and that, in accordance with the conclusions of science, to continue the punishment would endanger the victim's life. But the miserable governor, now completely intoxicated by the sight of blood, gave orders that the punishment should go on, and the flogging was continued up to seventy strokes, the number which the governor had for some reason fixed upon as necessary. When the seventieth stroke had been reached, the governor said "Enough! Next one!" And the mutilated victim, his back covered with blood, was lifted up and carried away unconscious, and another was led up. The sobs and groans of the crowd grew louder. But the representative of the state continued the torture.

Thus they flogged each of them up to the twelfth, and each of them received seventy strokes. They all implored mercy, shrieked and groaned. The sobs and cries of the crowd of women grew louder and more heart-rending, and the men's faces grew darker and darker. But they were surrounded by troops, and the torture did not cease till it had reached the limit which had been fixed by the caprice of the miserable half-drunken and insane creature they called the governor.

The officials, and officers, and soldiers not only assisted in it, but were even partly responsible for the affair, since by their presence they prevented any interference on the part of the crowd.

When I enquired of one of the governors why they made use of this kind of torture when people had already submitted and soldiers were stationed in the village, he replied with the important air of a man who thoroughly understands all the subtleties of statecraft, that if the peasants were not thoroughly subdued by flogging, they would begin offering opposition to the decisions of authorities again. When some of them had been thoroughly tortured, the authority of the state would be secured for ever among them.

And so that was why the Governor of Toula was going, in his turn, with his subordinate officials, officers, and soldiers, to carry out a similar measure! By precisely the same means, *i.e.* by murder and torture, obedience to the decision of the higher authorities was to be secured. And this decision was to enable a young landowner who had an income of one hundred thousand to gain three thousand roubles more by stealing a forest from a whole community of cold and famished peasants, to spend it in two or three weeks in the saloons of Moscow, Petersburg, or Paris. That was

what those people whom I met were going to do.

After my thoughts had for two years been turned in the same direction, fate seemed expressly to have brought me face to face for the first time in my life with a fact which showed me absolutely unmistakably in practice what had long been clear to me in theory—that the organisation of our society rests, not as people interested in maintaining the present order of things like to imagine, on certain principles of jurisprudence, but on simple brute force, on the murder and torture of men.

People who own great estates or fortunes, or who receive great revenues drawn from the class who are in want even of necessities, the working class, as well as all those who, like merchants, doctors, artists, clerks, learned professors, coachmen, cooks, writers, valets, and barristers, make their living about these rich people, like to believe that the privileges they enjoy are not the result of force, but of absolutely free and just interchange of services, and that their advantages, far from being gained by such punishments and murders as took place in Orel and several parts of Russia this year, and are always taking place all over Europe and America, have no kind of connection with these acts of violence. They like to believe that their privileges exist apart and are the

result of free contract among people; and that the violent cruelties perpetrated on the people also exist apart and are the result of some general judicial, political or economical laws. They try not to see that they all enjoy their privileges as a result of the same fact which forces the peasants who have tended the forest and who are in the direct need of it for fuel to give it up to a rich landowner who has taken no part in caring for its growth and has no need of it whatever—the fact, that is, that if they don't give it up they will be flogged or killed.

And yet if it is clear that it was only by means of menaces, blows or murder that the mill in Orel was enabled to yield a larger income, or that the forest which the peasants had planted became the property of the landowner, it should be equally clear that all the other exclusive rights enjoyed by the rich, by robbing the poor of their necessities, rest on the same basis of violence. If the peasants, who need land to maintain their families, may not cultivate the land about their houses, but one man, a Russian, English, Austrian, or any other great landowner, possesses land enough to maintain 1000 families, though he does not cultivate it himself; and if a merchant, profiting by the misery of the cultivators, taking corn from them at a third of its value, can keep this corn in his granaries with perfect security

while men are starving all round him, and sell it again for three times its value to the very cultivators he bought it from, it is evident that all this, too, comes from the same cause. And if one man may not buy of another a commodity from the other side of a certain fixed line, called the frontier, without paying certain duties on it to men who have taken no part whatever in its production—and if men are driven to sell their last cow to pay taxes which the government distributes among its functionaries, and spends on maintaining soldiers to murder these very taxpayers—it would appear self-evident that all this does not come about as the result of any abstract laws, but is based on just what was done in Orel, and which may be done in Toula, and is done periodically in one form or another throughout the whole world wherever there is a government, and where there are rich and poor.

Simply because torture and murder are not employed in every instance of oppression by force, those who enjoy the exclusive privileges of the ruling classes persuade themselves and others that their privileges are not based on torture and murder, but on some mysterious general causes, abstract laws, and so on. Yet one would think it was perfectly clear that if men, who consider it unjust (and all the working classes do consider it so nowadays), still pay the principal part of the

produce of their labour away to the capitalist and the landowner, and pay taxes, though they know to what a bad use these taxes are put, they do so not from recognition of abstract laws, of which they have never heard, but only because they know they will be beaten and killed if they don't do so.

And if there is no need to imprison, beat and kill men every time the landlord collects his rents, every time those who are in want of bread have to pay a swindling merchant three times its value, every time the factory hand has to be content with a wage less than half of the profit made by the employer, and every time a poor man pays his last rouble in taxes, it is because so many men have been beaten and killed for trying to resist these demands, that the lesson has now been learnt very thoroughly.

Just as a trained tiger, who does not eat meat put under his nose, and jumps over a stick at the word of command, does not act thus because he likes it, but because he remembers the red hot irons or the fast with which he was punished every time he did not obey: so men submitting to what is disadvantageous or even ruinous to them, and considered by them as unjust, act thus because they remember what they suffered for resisting it.

As for those who profit by the privileges gained by previous acts of violence, they

often forget, and like to forget, how these privileges were obtained. But one need only recall the facts of history—not the history of the exploits of different dynasties of rulers, but real history, the history of the oppression of the majority by a small number of men—to see that all the advantages the rich have over the poor are based on nothing but flogging, imprisonment and murder.

One need but reflect on the unceasing, persistent struggle of all to better their material position, which is the guiding motive of men of the present day, to be convinced that the advantages of the rich over the poor could never and can never be maintained by anything but force.

There may be cases of oppression, of violence and of punishments, though they are rare, the aim of which is not to secure the privileges of the propertied classes. But one may confidently assert that in any society—where, for every man living in ease, there are ten exhausted by labour, envious, covetous and often suffering with their families from direct privation—all the privileges of the rich, all their luxuries and superfluities, are obtained and maintained only by tortures, imprisonment, and murder.

The train I met on the 9th of September going with soldiers, guns, cartridges, and rods, to confirm the rich landowner in the possession of a small forest which he had taken

from the starving peasants, which they were in the direst need of, and he was in no need of at all, was a striking proof of how men are capable of doing deeds directly opposed to their principles and their conscience without perceiving it.

The special train consisted of one first-class carriage for the governor, the officials, and officers, and several luggage-vans crammed full of soldiers. The latter, smart young fellows in their clean new uniforms, were standing about in groups or sitting swinging their legs in the wide open doorways of the luggage-vans. Some were smoking, nudging each other, joking, grinning and laughing; others were munching sunflower seeds and spitting out the husks with an air of dignity. Some of them ran along the platform to drink some water from a tub there, and when they met the officers they slackened their pace, made their stupid gesture of salutation, raising their hands to their heads with serious faces as though they were doing something of the greatest importance. They kept their eyes on them till they had passed by them, and then set off running still more merrily, stamping their heels on the platform, laughing and chattering after the manner of healthy, good-natured young fellows travelling in lively company.

They were going to assist at the murder of their fathers or grandfathers just as if they

were going on a party of pleasure, or, at any rate, on some quite ordinary business.

The same impression was produced by the well-dressed functionaries and officers who were scattered about the platform and in the first-class carriage. At a table covered with bottles was sitting the governor who was responsible for the whole expedition, dressed in his half-military uniform and eating something while he chatted tranquilly about the weather with some acquaintances he had met; as though the business he was upon was of so simple and ordinary a character that it could not disturb his serenity and his interest in the change of weather.

At a little distance from the table sat the general of the police. He was not taking any refreshment, and had an impenetrable, bored expression, as though he were weary of the formalities to be gone through. On all sides officers were bustling noisily about in their red uniforms trimmed with gold: one sat at a table finishing his bottle of beer; another stood at the buffet eating a cake, and, brushing the crumbs off his uniform, threw down his money with a self-confident air; another was sauntering before the carriages of our train, staring at the faces of the women.

All these men, who were going to murder or to torture the famishing and defenceless creatures who provide them their sustenance, had the air of men who knew very well that

they were doing their duty, and some were even proud, were "glorying" in what they were doing!

What is the meaning of it?

All these people are within half-an-hour of reaching the place where, in order to provide a wealthy young man with three thousand roubles stolen from a whole community of famishing peasants, they may be forced to commit the most horrible acts one can conceive, to murder or torture, as was done in Orel, innocent beings, their brothers. And they see the place and time approaching with untroubled serenity!

To say that all these government officials, officers and soldiers do not know what is before them, is impossible, for they are prepared for it. The governor must have given directions about the rods, the officials must have sent an order for them, purchased them, and entered the item in their accounts. The military officers have given and received orders about cartridges. They all know that they are going to torture, perhaps to kill, their famishing fellow-creatures, and that they must set to work within an hour.

To say, as is usually said, and as they would themselves repeat, that they are acting from conviction of the necessity for supporting the state organisation, would be mistaken. For in the first place these men have probably never even thought about state organisation

and the necessity of it ; in the second place, they cannot possibly be convinced that the act in which they are taking part will tend to support, rather than to ruin, the state ; and thirdly, in reality the majority, if not all, of these men, far from ever sacrificing their own pleasure or tranquillity to support the state, never let slip an opportunity of profiting at the expense of the state in every way they can increase their own pleasure and ease. So that they are not acting thus for the sake of the abstract principle of the state.

What is the meaning of it ?

Yet I know all these men. If I don't know all of them personally, I know their characters pretty nearly, their past, and their way of thinking. They certainly all have mothers, some of them wives and children. They are certainly, for the most part, good, kind, even tender-hearted fellows, who hate every sort of cruelty, not to speak of murder ; many of them would not kill or hurt an animal. Moreover they are all professed Christians and regard all violence directed against the defenceless as base and disgraceful.

Certainly not one of them would be capable in everyday life, for his own personal profit, of doing a hundredth part of what the governor of Orel did. Every one of them would be insulted at the supposition that he was capable of doing anything of the kind in private life.

And yet they are within half an hour of reaching the place where they may be reduced to the inevitable necessity of committing this crime.

What is the meaning of it?

But it is not only these men who are going by train prepared for murder and torture. How could the men who began the whole business, the landowner, the commissioner, the judges, and those who gave the order and are responsible for it, the ministers, the Tsar, who are also good men, professed Christians, how could they elaborate such a plan and assent to it knowing its consequences? The spectators even, who took no part in the affair, how could they, who are indignant at the sight of any cruelty in private life, even the overtaxing of a horse, allow such a horrible deed to be perpetrated? How was it they did not rise in indignation and bar the roads, shouting: "No! Flog and kill starving men because they won't let their last possession be stolen from them without resistance, that we won't allow!" But far from anyone doing this, the majority, even of those who were the cause of the affair, such as the commissioner, the landowner, the judge, and those who took part in it and arranged it, as the governor, the ministers, and the Tsar, are perfectly tranquil and do not even feel a prick of conscience. And apparently all the men who are going

to carry out this crime are equally undisturbed.

The spectators, who one would suppose could have no personal interest in the affair, looked rather with sympathy than with disapproval at all these people preparing to carry out this infamous action. In the same compartment with me was a wood-merchant, who had risen from a peasant. He openly expressed aloud his sympathy with such punishments. "They can't disobey the authorities," he said: "that's what the authorities are for. Let them have a lesson! send their fleas flying! They'll give over making commotions, I warrant you. That's what they want."

What is the meaning of it?

It is not possible to say that all these people, who have provoked, or aided, or allowed this deed, are such worthless creatures that, knowing all the infamy of what they are doing, they do it against their principles, some for pay and for profit, others through fear of punishment. All of them in certain circumstances know how to stand up for their principles. Not one of these officials would steal a purse, read another man's letter, or put up with an affront without demanding satisfaction. Not one of these officers would consent to cheat at cards, would refuse to pay a debt of honour, would betray a comrade, run away on the

field of battle, or desert the flag. Not one of these soldiers would spit out the holy sacrament or eat meat on Good Friday. All these men are ready to face any kind of privation, suffering or danger rather than consent to do what they regard as wrong. They have, therefore, the strength to resist doing what is against their principles.

It is even less possible to assert that all these men are such brutes that it is natural and not distasteful to them to do such deeds. One need only talk to these people a little to see that all of them, the landowner even, and the judge, and the minister, and the Tsar and the government, the officers and the soldiers not only disapprove of such things in the depth of their soul, but suffer from the consciousness of their participation in them, when they recollect what they imply. But they try not to think about it.

One need only talk to any of these who are taking part in the affair, from the landowner to the lowest policeman or soldier, to see that in the depth of their soul they all know it is a wicked thing, that it would be better to have nothing to do with it, and are suffering from the knowledge.

A lady of liberal views, who was travelling in the same train with us, seeing the governor and the officers in the first class saloon and learning the object of the expedition, began,

intentionally raising her voice so that they should hear, to abuse the existing order of things and to cry shame on men who would take part in such proceedings. Everyone felt awkward, none knew where to look, but no one contradicted her. They tried to look as though such remarks were not worth answering. But one could see by their faces and their averted eyes that they were ashamed. I noticed the same thing in the soldiers. They too knew that what they were sent to do was a shameful thing, but they did not want to think about what was before them.

When the wood-merchant, as I suspect insincerely only, to show that he was a man of education, began to speak of the necessity of such measures, the soldiers who heard him all turned away from him, scowling and pretending not to hear.

All the men who, like the landowner, the commissioner, the minister, and the Tsar, were responsible for the perpetration of this act, as well as those who were now going to execute it, and even those who were mere spectators of it, knew that it was a wickedness, and were ashamed of taking any share in it, and even of being present at it.

Then why did they do it, or allow it to be done?

Ask them the question. And the landowner who started the affair, and the judge who pronounced a clearly unjust, even though

formally legal, decision, and those who commanded the execution of the decision, and those who, like the policemen, soldiers and peasants, will execute the deed with their own hands, flogging and killing their brothers—all who have devised, abetted, decreed, executed or allowed such crimes will make substantially the same reply.

The authorities, those who have started, devised and decreed the matter, will say that such acts are necessary for the maintenance of the existing order; the maintenance of the existing order is necessary for the welfare of the country and of humanity, for the possibility of social existence and human progress.

Men of the poorer class, peasants, and soldiers, who will have to execute the deed of violence with their own hands, say that they do so because it is the command of their superior authority, and the superior authority knows what he is about. That those are in authority who ought to be in authority, and that they know what they are doing, appears to them a truth of which there can be no doubt. If they could admit the possibility of mistake or error, it would only be in functionaries of a lower grade; the highest authority on which all the rest depends seems to them immaculate beyond suspicion.

Though expressing the motives of their conduct differently, both those in command

and their subordinates are agreed in saying that they act thus because the existing order is the order which must and ought to exist at the present time, and that therefore to support it is the sacred duty of every man.

On this acceptance of the necessity, and therefore immutability, of the existing order, all who take part in acts of violence on the part of government base the argument always advanced in their justification. "Since the existing order is immutable," they say, "the refusal of a single individual to perform the duties laid upon him will effect no change in things, and will only mean that some other man will be put in his place who may do the work worse—that is to say, more cruelly—to the still greater injury of the victims of the act of violence."

This conviction that the existing order is the necessary and therefore immutable order, which it is a sacred duty for every man to support, enables good men, of high principles in private life, to take part with conscience more or less untroubled in crimes such as that perpetrated in Orel, and that which the men in the Toula train were going to perpetrate.

But what is this conviction based on? It is easy to understand that the landowner prefers to believe that the existing order is inevitable and immutable, because this existing order secures him an income from his

hundreds and thousands of acres, by means of which he can lead his habitual, indolent and luxurious life.

It is easy to understand that the judge readily believes in the necessity of an order of things through which he receives a wage fifty times as great as the most industrious labourer can earn, and the same applies to all the higher officials. It is only under the existing *régime* that as governor, prosecutor, senator, members of the various councils, they can receive their several thousands of roubles a year, without which they and their families would at once sink into ruin, since, if it were not for the position they occupy, they would never by their own abilities, industry or acquirements get a thousandth part of their salaries. The minister, the Tsar, and all the higher authorities are in the same position. The only distinction is that the higher and the more exceptional their position, the more necessary it is for them to believe that the existing order is the only possible order of things. For without it they would not only be unable to gain an equal position, but would be bound to fall lower than all other people. A man who has of his own free will entered the police force at a wage of ten roubles, which he could easily earn in any other position, is hardly dependent on the preservation of the existing *régime*, and so he may not believe in its immutability. But

a king or an emperor, who receives millions for his post, and knows that there are thousands of people round him who would like to dethrone him and take his place—who knows that he would never receive such a revenue or so much honour in any other position—who knows, in most cases through his more or less despotic rule, that if he were dethroned he would have to answer for all his abuse of power :—he cannot but believe in the necessity and even sacredness of the existing order. The higher and the more profitable a man's position, the more unstable it becomes, and the more terrible and dangerous a fall from it for him, the more firmly the man believes in the existing order, and therefore with the more ease of conscience can such a man perpetrate cruel and wicked acts, as though they were not in his own interest, but for the maintenance of that order.

This is the case with all men in authority, who occupy positions more profitable than they could occupy except for the present *régime*, from the lowest police-officer to the Tsar. All of them are more or less convinced that the existing order is immutable, because—the chief consideration—it is to their advantage. But the peasants, the soldiers, who are at the bottom of the social scale, who have no kind of advantage from the existing order, who are in the very lowest position of subjection and

humiliation, what forces them to believe that the existing order in which they are in their humble and disadvantageous position is the order which ought to exist, and which they ought to support even at the cost of evil actions contrary to their conscience?

What forces these men to the false reasoning that the existing order is unchanging, and that therefore they ought to support it, when it is so obvious, on the contrary, that it is only unchanging because they themselves support it?

What forces these peasants, taken only yesterday from the plough and dressed in ugly and unseemly costumes with blue collars and gilt buttons, to go with guns and sabres and murder their famishing fathers and brothers? They gain no kind of advantage and can be in no fear of losing the position they occupy, because it is worse than that from which they have been taken.

The persons in authority of the higher orders, landowners, merchants, judges, senators, governors, ministers, tsars, and officers take part in such doings because the existing order is to their advantage. In other respects they are often good and kind-hearted men, and they are more able to take part in such doings because their share in them is limited to suggestions, decisions, and orders. These persons in authority never do themselves what they suggest, decide, or command to be done. For the most part they do not

even see how all the atrocious deeds they have suggested and authorised are carried out. But the unfortunate men of the lower orders, who gain no kind of advantage from the existing *régime*, but on the contrary are treated with the utmost contempt, support it even by dragging people with their own hands from their families, handcuffing them, throwing them into prison, guarding them, shooting them. Why do they do it ?

What forces them to believe that the existing order is unchanging and they must support it ?

All violence rests, we know, on those who do the beating, the handcuffing, the imprisoning and the killing with their own hands. If there were no soldiers or armed policemen, ready to kill or outrage any one as they are ordered, not one of those people who sign sentences of death, imprisonment, or galley-slavery for life would make up his mind to hang, imprison, or torture a thousandth part of those whom, quietly sitting in his study, he now orders to be tortured in all kinds of ways, simply because he does not see it nor do it himself, but only gets it done at a distance by these servile tools.

All the acts of injustice and cruelty which are committed in the ordinary course of daily life have only become habitual, because there are these men always ready to carry out such acts of injustice and cruelty. If it were not

for them, far from any one using violence against the immense masses who are now ill-treated, those who now command their punishment would not venture to sentence them, would not even dare to dream of the sentences they decree with such easy confidence at present. And if it were not for these men, ready to kill or torture any one at their commander's will, no one would dare to claim, as all the idle landowners claim with such assurance, that a piece of land, surrounded by peasants, who are in wretchedness from want of land, is the property of a man who does not cultivate it, or that stores of corn taken by swindling from the peasants ought to remain untouched in the midst of a population dying of hunger, because the merchants must make their profit. If it were not for these servile instruments at the disposal of the authorities, it could never have entered the head of the landowner to rob the peasants of the forest they had tended, nor of the officials to think they are entitled to their salaries, taken from the famishing people, the price of their oppression, least of all could any one dream of killing or exiling men for exposing falsehood and telling the truth. All this can only be done because the authorities are confidently assured that they have always these servile tools at hand, ready to carry all their demands into effect by means of torture and murder.

All the deeds of violence of tyrants, from Napoleon to the lowest commander of a company who fires upon a crowd, can only be explained by the intoxicating effect of their absolute power over these slaves. All force, therefore, rests on these men who carry out the deeds of violence with their own hands, the men who serve in the police, or the army, especially the army, for the police only venture to do their work because the army is at their back.

What, then, has brought these masses of honest men, on whom the whole thing depends, who gain nothing by it, and who have to do these atrocious deeds with their own hands—what has brought them to accept the amazing delusion that the existing order, unprofitable, ruinous and fatal as it is for them, is the order which ought to exist?

Who has led them into this amazing delusion?

They can never have persuaded themselves that they ought to do what is against their conscience, and also the source of misery and ruin for themselves and all their class, who make up nine-tenths of the population.

“How can you kill people, when it is written in God’s commandment: ‘Thou shalt not kill’?” I have often enquired of different soldiers. And I always drove them to embarrassment and confusion by reminding

them of what they did not want to think about. They knew they were bound by the law of God, "Thou shalt not kill," and knew, too, that they were bound by their duty as soldiers, but had never reflected on the contradiction between these duties. The drift of the timid answers I received to this question was always approximately this: that killing in war and executing criminals by command of the government are not included in the general prohibition of murder. But when I said this distinction was not made in the law of God and reminded them of the Christian duty of fraternity, forgiveness of injuries, and love, which could not be reconciled with murder, the peasants usually agreed, but in their turn began to ask me questions: "How does it happen," they enquired, "that the government (which according to their ideas cannot do wrong) sends the army to war and orders criminals to be executed?" When I answered that the government does wrong in giving such orders, the peasants fell into still greater confusion, and either broke off the conversation or else got angry with me.

"They must have found a law for it. The archbishops know as much about it as we do, I should hope," a Russian soldier once observed to me. And in saying this the soldier obviously set his mind at rest, in the full conviction that his spiritual guides had

found a law which authorised his ancestors, and the tsars and their descendants and millions of men, to serve as he was doing himself, and that the question I had put him was a kind of hoax or conundrum on my part.

Every one in our Christian society knows, either by tradition or by revelation, or by the voice of conscience, that murder is one of the most fearful crimes a man can commit, as the Gospel tells us ; and that the sin of murder cannot be limited to certain persons—that is, murder cannot be a sin for some and not a sin for others. Every one knows that if murder is a sin, it is always a sin, whoever are the victims murdered, just like the sin of adultery, theft, or any other. At the same time from their childhood up, men see that murder is not only permitted, but even sanctioned by the blessing of those whom they are accustomed to regard as their divinely appointed spiritual guides, and see their secular leaders with calm assurance organising murder, proud to wear murderous arms, and demanding of others in the name of the laws of the country, and even of God, that they should take part in murder. Men see that there is some inconsistency here, but not being able to analyse it, involuntarily assume that this apparent inconsistency is only the result of their ignorance. The very grossness and obviousness of the inconsistency confirms them in this conviction.

They cannot imagine that the leaders of civilisation, the educated classes, could so confidently preach two such opposed principles as the law of Christ and murder. A simple, uncorrupted youth cannot imagine that those who stand so high in his opinion, whom he regards as holy or learned men, could for any object whatever mislead him so shamefully. But this is just what has always been and always is done to him. It is done (1) by instilling, by example and direct instruction, from childhood up, into the working people who have not time to study moral and religious questions for themselves, the idea that torture and murder are compatible with Christianity, and that for certain objects of state, torture and murder are not only admissible but ought to be employed; and (2) by instilling into certain of the people, who have either voluntarily enlisted or been taken by compulsion into the army, the idea that the perpetration of murder and torture with their own hands is a sacred duty, and even a glorious exploit, worthy of praise and reward.

The general delusion is diffused among all people by means of the catechisms, or books which nowadays replace them, in use for the compulsory education of children. In them it is stated that violence—that is, imprisonment and execution—as well as murder in civil or foreign war in the defence

and maintenance of the existing state organisation (whatever that may be, absolute or limited monarchy, convention, consulate, empire of this or that Napoleon or Boulanger, constitutional monarchy, commune or republic) is absolutely lawful and not opposed to morality and Christianity.

This is stated in all catechisms or books used in schools. And men are so thoroughly persuaded of it that they grow up, live and die in that conviction without once entertaining a doubt about it.

This is one form of deception, the general deception instilled into every one; but there is another special deception practised upon the soldiers or police who are picked out by one means or another to do the torturing and murdering necessary to defend and maintain the existing *régime*.

In all military instructions there appears, in one form or another, what is expressed in the Russian military code in the following words:

Article 87. To carry out exactly and without comment the orders of a superior officer means: to carry out an order received from a superior officer exactly without considering whether it is good or not, and whether it is possible to carry it out. The superior officer is responsible for the consequences of the order he gives.

Article 88. The subordinate ought never to refuse to carry out the orders of a superior

officer except when he sees clearly that in carrying out his superior officer's command, he breaks (the law of God, one involuntarily expects; not at all) *his oath of fidelity and allegiance to the Tsar*.

It is here said that the man who is a soldier can and ought to carry out all the orders of his superior without exception. And as these orders for the most part involve murder, it follows that he ought to break all the laws of God and man. The one law he may not break is that of fidelity and allegiance to the man who happens at a given moment to be in power.

Precisely the same thing is said in other words in all codes of military instruction. And it could not be otherwise, since the whole power of the army and the state is based in reality on this delusive emancipation of men from their duty to God and their conscience, and the substitution of duty to their superior officer for all other duties.

This then is the foundation of the belief of the lower classes that the existing *régime* so fatal for them is the *régime* which ought to exist, and which they ought therefore to support even by torture and murder.

This belief is founded on a conscious deception practised on them by the higher classes.

And it cannot be otherwise. To compel the lower classes, which are more numerous,

to oppress and ill-treat themselves, even at the cost of actions opposed to their conscience, it was necessary to deceive them. And it has been done accordingly.

Not many days ago I saw once more this shameless deception being openly practised, and once more I marvelled that it could be practised so easily and impudently.

At the beginning of November, as I was passing through Toula, I saw once again at the gates of the Zemsky Court-house the crowd of peasants I had so often seen before, and heard the drunken shouts of the men mingled with the pitiful lamentations of their wives and mothers. It was the recruiting session.

I can never pass by this spectacle. It attracts me by a kind of fascination of repulsion. I again went into the crowd, took my stand among the peasants, looked about and asked questions. And once again I was amazed that this hideous crime can be perpetrated so easily in broad daylight and in the midst of a large town.

As the custom is every year, in all the villages and hamlets of the 100 millions of Russians, on the first of November the village elders had assembled the young men inscribed on the lists, often their own sons among them, and had brought them to the town.

On the road the recruits have been drinking without intermission, unchecked by the elders,

who feel that going on such an insane errand, abandoning their wives and mothers and renouncing all they hold sacred in order to become a senseless instrument of destruction, would be too agonising if they were not stupefied with spirits.

And so they have come, drinking, swearing, singing, fighting and scuffling with one another. They have spent the night in taverns. In the morning they have slept off their drunkenness and have gathered together at the Zemsky Court-house.

Some of them, in new sheepskin pelisses, with knitted scarves round their necks, their eyes swollen from drinking, are shouting wildly to one another to show their courage; others, crowded near the door, are quietly and mournfully waiting their turn, between their weeping wives and mothers (I had chanced upon the day of the actual enrolling, that is, the examination of those whose names are on the list); others meantime were crowding into the hall of the recruiting office.

Inside the office the work was going on rapidly. The door is opened and the guard calls Piotr Sidorov. Piotr Sidorov starts, crosses himself and goes into a little room with a glass door, where the conscripts undress. A comrade of Piotr Sidorov's, who has just been passed for service and come naked out of the revision office, is

dressing hurriedly, his teeth chattering. Sidorov has already heard the news, and can see from his face too that he has been taken. He wants to ask him questions, but they hurry him and tell him to make haste and undress. He throws off his pelisse, slips his boots off his feet, takes off his waistcoat and draws his shirt over his head, and naked, trembling all over and exhaling an odour of tobacco, spirits and sweat, goes into the revision office, not knowing what to do with his brawny bare arms.

Directly facing him in the revision office hangs in a great gold frame a portrait of the Tsar in full uniform with decorations, and in the corner a little portrait of Christ in a shirt and a crown of thorns. In the middle of the room is a table covered with green cloth, on which there are papers lying and a three-cornered ornament surmounted by an eagle—the zertsal. Round the table are sitting the revising officers, looking collected and indifferent. One is smoking a cigarette; another is looking through some papers. Directly Sidorov comes in, a guard goes up to him, places him under the measuring-frame, raising him under his chin, and straightening his legs.

The man with the cigarette—he is the doctor—comes up, and without looking at the recruit's face, but somewhere beyond it feels his body over with an air of disgust,

measures him, tests him, tells the guard to open his mouth, tells him to breathe, to speak. Some one notes something down. At last, without having once looked him in the face, the doctor says, "Right! Next one," and with a weary air sits down again at the table. The soldiers again hustle and hurry the lad. He somehow gets into his trousers, wraps his feet in rags, puts on his boots, looks for his scarf and cap, and bundles his pelisse under his arm. Then they lead him into the main hall, shutting him off apart from the rest by a bench, behind which all the conscripts who have been passed for service are waiting. Another village lad like himself, but from a distant province, now a soldier armed with a gun with a sharp pointed bayonet at the end, keeps watch over him, ready to run him through the body if he should think of trying to escape.

Meantime the crowd of fathers, mothers, and wives, hustled by the police, are pressing round the doors to hear whose lad has been taken, whose is let off. One of the rejected comes out and announces that Piotr is taken, and at once a shrill cry is heard from Piotr's young wife, for whom this word "taken" means separation for four or five years, the life of a soldier's wife as a servant, often a prostitute.

But here comes a man along the street with flowing hair and in a peculiar dress, who gets

out of his droskhy and goes into the Zemsky Court-house. The police clear a way for him through the crowd. It is the "reverend father," come to administer the oath. And this "father," who has been persuaded that he is specially and exclusively devoted to the service of Christ, and who, for the most part, does not himself see the deception in which he lives, goes into the hall where the conscripts are waiting. He throws round him a kind of curtain of brocade, pulls his long hair out over it, opens the very Gospel in which swearing is forbidden, takes the cross—the very cross on which Christ was crucified because he would not do what this false servant of his is telling men to do—and puts them on the lectern. And all these unhappy, defenceless, and deluded lads repeat after him the lie, which he utters with the assurance of familiarity.

He reads, and they repeat after him :

"I promise and swear by Almighty God upon his holy Gospel, &c., to defend, &c.," and that is, to murder any one I am told to, and to do everything I am told by men I know nothing of, and who care nothing for me except as an instrument for perpetrating the crimes by which they are kept in their position of power and my brothers in their condition of misery. All the conscripts repeat these ferocious words without thinking. And then the so-called "father" goes away

with a sense of having correctly and conscientiously done his duty. And all these poor deluded lads believe that these nonsensical and incomprehensible words which they have just uttered set them free for the whole time of their service from their duties as men, and lay upon them fresh and more binding duties as soldiers.

And this crime is perpetrated publicly and no one cries out to the deceiving and the deceived: "Think what you are doing! This is the basest, falsest lie by which not bodies only but souls too are destroyed."

No one does this. On the contrary, when all have been enrolled, and they are to be let out again, the military officer goes with a confident and majestic air into the hall where the drunken, cheated lads are shut up, and cries in a bold, military voice: "Your health, my lads! I congratulate you on 'serving the Tsar!'" And they, poor fellows (some one has given them a hint beforehand) mutter awkwardly, their voices thick with drink, something to the effect that they are glad.

Meantime the crowd of fathers, mothers and wives is standing at the doors waiting. The women keep their tearful eyes fixed on the doors. They open at last, and out come the conscripts, unsteady, but trying to put a good face on it. Here are Piotr, and Vania, and Makar, trying not to look their dear ones in the face. Nothing is heard but the

wailing of the wives and mothers. Some of the lads embrace them and weep with them, others make a show of courage, and others try to comfort them.

The wives and mothers, knowing that they will be left for three, four or five years without their breadwinners, weep and rehearse their woes aloud. The fathers say little. They only utter a clucking sound with their tongues and sigh mournfully, knowing that they will see no more of the steady lads they have reared and trained to help them, that they will come back not the same quiet, hard-working labourers, but, for the most part, conceited and demoralised, unfitted for their simple life.

And then all the crowd get into their sledges again and move away down the street to the taverns and pot-houses, and louder than ever sounds the medley of singing and sobbing, drunken shouts and the wailing of the wives and mothers, the sounds of the accordion and oaths. They all turn into the taverns, whose revenues go to the government, and the drinking bout begins which stifles their sense of the wrong which is being done them.

For two or three weeks they go on living at home, and most of that time they are "jaunting"—that is, drinking.

On a fixed day they collect them, drive them together like a flock of sheep, and begin

to train them in the military exercises and drill. Their teachers are fellows like themselves, only deceived and brutalised two or three years sooner. The means of instruction are : deception, stupefaction, blows and vodka. And before a year has passed these good, intelligent, healthy minded lads will be as brutal beings as their instructors.

"Come, now, suppose your father were arrested and tried to make his escape?" I asked a young soldier.

"I should run him through with my bayonet," he answered with the foolish intonation peculiar to soldiers; "and if he made off, I ought to shoot him," he added, obviously proud of knowing what he must do if his father were escaping.

And, when a good-hearted lad has been brought to a state lower than that of a brute, he is just what is wanted by those who use him as an instrument of violence. He is ready; the man has been destroyed and a new instrument of violence has been created. And all this is done every year, every autumn everywhere, through all Russia, in broad daylight in the midst of large towns where all may see it, and the deception is so clever, so skilful, that, though all men know the infamy of it in their hearts and see all its horrible results, they cannot throw it off and be free.

When one's eyes are opened to this awful deception practised upon us, one marvels that

the teachers of the Christian religion, and of morals, the instructors of youth or even the good-hearted and intelligent parents who are to be found in every society, can teach any kind of morality in a society in which it is openly admitted (it is so admitted, under all governments and all churches) that murder and torture, form an indispensable element in the life of all, and that there must always be special men trained to kill their fellows, and that anyone of us may have to become such a trained assassin.

How can children, youths, and people generally be taught any kind of morality—not to speak of teaching in the spirit of Christianity—side by side with the doctrine that murder is necessary for the public weal, and therefore legitimate, and that there are men—of whom each of us may have to be one—whose duty is to murder and torture, and commit all sorts of crimes at the will of those who are in possession of authority. If this is so, and one can and ought to murder and torture, there is not, and cannot be, any kind of moral law, but only the law that might is right. And this is just how it is. In reality that is the doctrine—justified to some by the theory of the struggle for existence—which reigns in our society.

And, indeed, what sort of ethical doctrine could admit the legitimacy of murder for any object whatever? It is as impossible as a

theory of mathematics admitting that two is equal to three.

There may be a semblance of mathematics admitting that two is equal to three, but there can be no real science of mathematics. And there can only be a semblance of ethics in which murder in the shape of war and the execution of criminals is allowed, but no true ethics. The recognition of the life of every man as sacred is the first and only basis of all ethics.

The doctrine of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth has been abrogated by Christianity because it is the justification of immorality, and a mere semblance of equity, and has no real meaning. Life is a value which has no weight nor size, and cannot be compared to any other, and so there is no sense in destroying a life for a life. Besides, every social law aims at the amelioration of man's life. What way, then, can the annihilation of the life of some men ameliorate men's life? Annihilation of life cannot be a means of the amelioration of life; it is a suicidal act.

To destroy another life for the sake of justice is as though a man, to repair the misfortune of losing one arm, should cut off the other arm for the sake of equity.

But putting aside the sin of deluding men into regarding the most awful crimes as a duty, putting aside the revolting sin of using

the name and authority of Christ to sanction what He most condemned, not to speak of the curse on those who cause these "little ones" to offend—how can people who cherish their own way of life, their progress, even from the point of view of their personal security, allow the formation in their midst of an overwhelming force as senseless, cruel, and destructive, as every government is organised on the basis of an army? Even the most cruel band of brigands is not so much to be dreaded as such a government.

The power of every brigand-chief is at least so far limited that the men of his band preserve at least some human liberty, and can refuse to commit acts opposed to their conscience. But, owing to the perfection to which the discipline of the army has been brought, there is no limit to check men who form part of a regularly organised government. There are no crimes so revolting that they would not readily be committed by men who form part of a government or army, at the will of any one (such as Boulanger, Napoleon, or Pougachef) who may chance to be at their head.

Often when one sees conscription levies, military drills and manœuvres, police-officers with loaded revolvers, and sentinels at their posts with bayonets on their rifles; when one hears for whole days at a time (as I hear it in Hamovniky where I live) the whistle of balls and the dull thud as they fall in the

sand ; when one sees, in the midst of a town where any effort at violence in self-defence is forbidden, where the sale of powder and of chemicals, where furious driving and practising as a doctor without a diploma, and so on, are not allowed, thousands of disciplined troops, trained to murder, and subject to one man's will,—one asks oneself : How can people who prize their security quietly allow it, and put up with it ? Apart from the immorality and evil effects of it, nothing can possibly be more unsafe. What are people thinking about ?—I don't mean now Christians, ministers of religion, philanthropists, and moralists, but simply people who value their life, their security, and their comfort. This organisation, we know, will work just as well in one man's hands as another's. To-day, let us assume, power is in the hands of a ruler who can be endured, but to-morrow it may be seized by a Biron, an Elizabeth, a Catherine, a Pougachef, a Napoleon I. or a Napoleon III.

And the man in authority, endurable to-day, may become a brute to-morrow, or may be succeeded by a mad or imbecile heir, like the King of Bavaria or our Paul I.

And not only the highest authorities, but all little satraps scattered over everywhere, like so many General Baranovs, governors, police-officers even, and commanders of companies, can perpetrate the most awful crimes before there is time for them to be

removed from office. And this is what is constantly happening.

One involuntarily asks how can men let it go on, not from higher considerations only, but from regard to their own safety.

The answer to this question is that it is not all people who do tolerate it ; some—the greater proportion—deluded and submissive, have no choice and have to tolerate anything. It is tolerated by those who only under such an organisation can occupy a position of profit. They tolerate it, because for them the risks of suffering from a foolish or cruel man being at the head of the government or the army are always less than the disadvantages to which they would be exposed by the destruction of the organisation itself.

A judge, a commander of police, a governor or an officer will keep his position just the same under Boulanger or the republic, under Pougachef or Catherine. He will lose his profitable position for certain if the existing order of things which secured it to him is destroyed. And so all these people feel no uneasiness as to who is at the head of the organisation, they will adapt themselves to anyone ; they only dread the downfall of the organisation itself, and that is the reason—though often an unconscious one—that they support it.

One often wonders why independent people, who are not forced to do so in any

way, the so-called *élite* of society, should go into the army in Russia, England, Germany, Austria, and even France, and seek opportunities of becoming murderers. Why do even high-principled parents send their boys to military schools? Why do mothers buy their children toy helmets, guns and swords as playthings? (The peasant's children never play at soldiers, by the way.) Why do good men, and even women, who have certainly no interest in war, go into raptures over the various exploits of Skobelev and others, and vie with one another in glorifying them? Why do men, who are not obliged to do so, and get no fee for it, devote, like the marshals of nobility in Russia, whole months of toil to a business physically disagreeable and morally painful—the enrolling of conscripts? Why do all kings and emperors wear the military uniform? Why do they all hold military reviews, why do they organise manoeuvres, distribute rewards to the military, and raise monuments to generals and successful commanders? Why do rich men of independent position consider it an honour to perform a valet's duties in attendance on crowned personages, flattering them and cringing to them, and pretending to believe in their peculiar superiority? Why do men who have ceased to believe in the superstitions of the mediæval church, and who could not possibly believe in them,

seriously and consistently pretend to believe in and give their support to the demoralising and blasphemous institution of the church? Why is it that not only governments but private persons of the higher classes try so jealously to maintain the ignorance of the people? Why do they fall with such fury on any effort at breaking down religious superstitions or really enlightening the people? Why do historians, novelists and poets, who have no hope of gaining anything by their flatteries, make heroes of kings, emperors, and conquerors of past times? Why do men who call themselves learned dedicate whole lifetimes to making theories to prove that violence employed by authority against the people is not violence at all, but a special right? One often wonders why a fashionable lady or an artist, who, one would think, would take no interest in political or military questions, should always condemn strikes of working people, and defend war; and should always be found without hesitation opposed to the one, and favourable to the other.

But one no longer wonders when one realises that in the higher classes there is an unerring instinct of what tends to maintain and of what tends to destroy the organisation by virtue of which they enjoy their privileges. The fashionable lady had certainly not reasoned out that, if there were no capitalists and no army to defend them, her husband

would have no fortune, and she could not have her entertainments and her ball-dresses. And the artist certainly does not argue that he needs the capitalists and the troops to defend them, so that they may buy his pictures. But instinct, replacing reason in this instance, guides them unerringly. And it is precisely this instinct which leads all men, with few exceptions, to support all the religious, political and economic institutions which are to their advantage.

But is it possible that the higher classes support the existing order of things simply because it is to their advantage? Cannot they see that this order of things is essentially irrational, that it is no longer consistent with the stage of moral development attained by people, and with public opinion, and that it is fraught with perils? The governing classes, or at least the good, honest, and intelligent people of them, cannot but suffer from these fundamental inconsistencies, and see the dangers with which they are threatened. And is it possible that all the millions of the lower classes can feel easy in conscience when they commit such obviously evil deeds as torture and murder from fear of punishment? Indeed, it could not be so; neither the former nor the latter could fail to see the irrationality of their conduct, if the complexity of government organisation did not obscure the unnatural senselessness of their actions.

So many instigate, assist or sanction the commission of everyone of these actions that no one who has a hand in them feels himself morally responsible for it.

It is the custom among assassins to oblige all the witnesses of a murder to strike the murdered victim, that the responsibility may be divided among as large a number of people as possible. The same principle in different forms is applied under the government organisation in the perpetration of the crimes, without which no government organisation could exist. Rulers always try to implicate as many citizens as possible in all the crimes committed in their support.

Of late this tendency has been expressed in a very obvious manner by the obligation of all citizens to take part in legal processes as jurors, in the army as soldiers, in the local government or legislative assembly as electors or members.

Just as in a wicker basket all the ends are so hidden away that it is hard to find them, in the state organisation the responsibility for the crimes committed is so hidden away that men will commit the most atrocious acts without seeing their responsibility for them.

In ancient times tyrants got credit for the crimes they committed, but in our day the most atrocious infamies inconceivable under the Neros are perpetrated and no one gets blamed for them.

One set of people have suggested, another set have proposed, a third have reported, a fourth have decided, a fifth have confirmed, a sixth have given the order, and a seventh set of men have carried it out. They hang, they flog to death women, old men, and innocent people, as was done recently among us in Russia at the Yusovsky factory, and is always being done everywhere in Europe and America in the struggle with the anarchists and all other rebels against the existing order; they shoot and hang men by hundreds and thousands, or massacre millions in war, or break men's hearts in solitary confinement, and ruin their souls in the corruption of a soldier's life, and no one is responsible.

At the bottom of the social scale soldiers armed with guns, pistols and sabres injure and murder people, and compel men through these means to enter the army, and are absolutely convinced that the responsibility of the actions rests solely on the officers who command them.

At the top of the scale, the Tsars, presidents, ministers and parliaments decree these tortures and murders and military conscription, and are fully convinced that, since they are either placed in authority by the grace of God or by the society they govern, which demands such decrees from them, they cannot be held responsible. Between these two extremes are the

intermediary personages who superintend the murders and other acts of violence and are fully convinced that the responsibility is taken off their shoulders partly by their superiors who have given the order, partly by the fact that such orders are expected from them by all who are at the bottom of the scale.

The authority who gives the orders and the authority which executes them at the two extreme ends of the state organisation meet together like the two ends of a ring; they support and rest on one another and enclose all that lies within the ring.

Without the conviction that there is a person or persons who will take the whole responsibility of his acts, not one soldier would ever lift a hand to commit a murder or other deed of violence.

Without the conviction that it is expected by the whole people, not a single king, emperor, president or parliament would order murders or acts of violence. Without the conviction that there are persons of a higher grade who will take the responsibility and people of a lower grade who require such acts for their welfare, not one of the intermediate class would superintend such deeds.

The state is so organised that, wherever a man is placed in the social scale, his irresponsibility is the same. The higher his grade the more he is under the influence of demands from below, and the less he is

controlled by orders from above, and *vice versa*.

All men, then, bound together for state organisation throw the responsibility of their acts on one another—the peasant soldier on the nobleman or merchant who is his officer, and the officer on the nobleman who has been appointed governor, the governor on the nobleman or son of an official who is minister, the minister on the member of the royal family who occupies the post of Tsar, and the Tsar again on all these officials, noblemen, merchants and peasants. But that is not all. Besides the fact that men get rid of the sense of responsibility for their actions in this way, they lose their moral sense of responsibility also, by the fact that in forming themselves into a state organisation they persuade themselves and each other so continually, and so indefatigably, that they are not all equal, but “as the stars apart,” that they come to believe it genuinely themselves. Thus some are persuaded that they are not simple people like everyone else, but special people who are to be specially honoured. It is instilled into another set of men by every possible means that they are inferior to others, and therefore must submit without a murmur to every order given them by their superiors.

On this inequality, above all on the elevation of some and the degradation of others, rests the capacity men have of being blind to

the insanity of the existing order of life, and all the cruelty and criminality of the deception practised by one set of men on another.

Those in whom the idea has been instilled that they are invested with a special supernatural grandeur and consequence, are so intoxicated with a sense of their own imaginary dignity that they cease to feel their responsibility for what they do.

While those, on the other hand, in whom the idea is fostered that they are inferior animals, bound to obey their superiors in everything, fall, through this perpetual humiliation, into a strange condition of stupefied servility, and in this stupefied state do not see the significance of their actions and lose all consciousness of responsibility for what they do.

The intermediate class, who obey the orders of their superiors on the one hand and regard themselves as superior beings on the other, are intoxicated by power and stupefied by servility at the same time and so lose the sense of their responsibility.

One need only glance during a review at the commander-in-chief, intoxicated with self-importance, followed by his retinue, all on magnificent and gaily-apparelled horses, in splendid uniforms and wearing decorations, and see how they ride to the harmonious and solemn strains of music before the ranks

of soldiers, all presenting arms and petrified with servility : one need only glance at this spectacle to understand that at such moments, when they are in a state of the most complete intoxication, commander-in-chief, soldiers and intermediate officers alike would be capable of committing crimes of which they would never dream under other conditions.

The intoxication produced by such stimulants as parades, reviews, religious solemnities, and coronations, is, however, an acute and temporary condition ; but there are other forms of chronic, permanent intoxication, to which those are liable who have any kind of authority, from that of the Tsar to that of the lowest police-officer at the street corner, and also those who are in subjection to authority and in a state of stupefied servility. The latter, like all slaves, always find a justification for their own servility in ascribing the greatest possible dignity and importance to those they serve.

It is principally through this false idea of inequality, and the intoxication of power and of servility resulting from it, that men associated in a state organisation are enabled to commit acts opposed to their conscience without the least scruple or remorse.

Under the influence of this intoxication, men imagine themselves no longer simply men as they are, but some special beings—noblemen, merchants, governors, judges,

officers, tsars, ministers, or soldiers—no longer bound by ordinary human duties, but by other duties far more weighty—the peculiar duties of a nobleman, merchant, governor, judge, officer, tsar, minister, or soldier.

Thus the landowner, who claimed the forest, acted as he did only because he fancied himself not a simple man, having the same rights to life as the peasants living beside him and every one else, but a great landowner, a member of the nobility, and under the influence of the intoxication of power he felt his dignity offended by the peasants' claims. It was only through this feeling that, without considering the consequences that might follow, he sent in a claim to be reinstated in his pretended rights.

In the same way the judges who wrongfully adjudged the forest to the proprietor, did so simply because they fancied themselves not simply men like every one else, and so bound to be guided in everything only by what they consider right, but, under the intoxicating influence of power, imagined themselves the representatives of the justice which cannot err ; while under the intoxicating influence of servility they imagined themselves bound to carry out to the letter the instructions inscribed in a certain book, the so-called law. In the same way all who take part in such an affair, from the highest repre-

sentative of authority who signs his assent to the report, from the superintendent presiding at the recruiting sessions and the priest who deludes the recruits to the lowest soldier who is ready now to fire on his own brothers, imagine, in the intoxication of power or of servility, that they are some conventional characters. They do not face the question that is presented to them, whether or not they ought to take part in what their conscience judges an evil act, but fancy themselves various conventional personages—one as the Tsar, God's anointed, an exceptional being, called to watch over the happiness of 100 millions of men; another as the representative of nobility; another as a priest, who has received special grace by his ordination; another as a soldier, bound by his military oath to carry out all he is commanded without reflection.

Only under the intoxication of the power or the servility of their imagined positions could all these people act as they do.

Were not they all firmly convinced that their respective vocations of Tsar, minister, governor, judge, nobleman, landowner, superintendent, officer and soldier are something real and important, not one of them would even think without horror and aversion of taking part in what they do now.

The conventional positions, established hundreds of years, recognised for centuries

and by every one, distinguished by special names and dresses, and, moreover, confirmed by every kind of solemnity, have so penetrated into men's minds through their senses, that, forgetting the ordinary conditions of life common to all, they look at themselves and every one only from this conventional point of view, and are guided in their estimation of their own actions and those of others by this conventional standard.

Thus we see a man of perfect sanity and ripe age, simply because he is decked out with some fringe, or embroidered keys on his coat tails, or a coloured ribbon only fit for some gaily dressed girl, and is told that he is a general, a chamberlain, a knight of the order of St. Andrew, or some similar nonsense, suddenly become self-important, proud, and even happy, or, on the contrary, grow melancholy and unhappy to the point of falling ill, because he has failed to obtain the expected decoration or title. Or what is still more striking, a young man, perfectly sane in every other matter, independent and beyond the fear of want, simply because he has been appointed judicial prosecutor or district commander, separates a poor widow from her little children, and shuts her up in prison, leaving her children uncared for, all because the unhappy woman carried on a secret trade in spirits, and so deprived the revenue of twenty-five roubles, and he does not feel

the least pang of remorse. Or what is still more amazing : a man, otherwise sensible and good-hearted, simply because he is given a badge or a uniform to wear, and told that he is a guard or customs officer, is ready to fire on people, and neither he nor those around him regard him as to blame for it, but, on the contrary, would regard him as to blame if he did not fire. To say nothing of judges and juries who condemn men to death, and soldiers who kill men by thousands without the slightest scruple, merely because it has been instilled into them that they are not simply men, but jurors, judges, generals and soldiers.

This strange and abnormal condition of men under state organisation is usually expressed in the following words : "As a man, I pity him ; but as guard, judge, general, governor, Tsar, or soldier, it is my duty to kill or torture him." Just as though there were some positions conferred and recognised which would exonerate us from the obligations laid on each of us by the fact of our common humanity.

So, for example, in the case before us, men are going to murder and torture the famishing, and they admit that in the dispute between the peasants and the landowner the peasants are right (all those in command said as much to me). They know that the peasants are wretched, poor, and hungry, and

the landowner is rich and inspires no sympathy. Yet they are all going to kill the peasants to secure 3000 roubles for the landowner only because at that moment they fancy themselves not men but governor, official, general of police, officer, and soldier, respectively, and consider themselves bound to obey, not the eternal demands of the conscience of man, but the casual, temporary demands of their positions as officers or soldiers.

Strange as it may seem, the sole explanation of this astonishing phenomenon is that they are in the condition of the hypnotised, who, they say, feel and act like the creatures they are commanded by the hypnotiser to represent. When, for instance, it is suggested to the hypnotised subject that he is lame, he begins to walk lame; that he is blind, and he cannot see; that he is a wild beast, and he begins to bite. This is the state, not only of those who were going on this expedition, but of all men who fulfil their state and social duties in preference to and in detriment of their human duties.

The essence of this state is that under the influence of one suggestion they lose the power of criticising their actions, and therefore do without thinking everything consistent with the suggestion to which they are led by example, precept, or insinuation.

The difference between those hypnotised

by scientific men and those under the influence of the state hypnotism, is that an imaginary position is suggested to the former suddenly by one person in a very brief space of time, and so the hypnotised state appears to us in a striking and surprising form, while the imaginary position suggested by state influence is induced slowly, little by little, imperceptibly from childhood, sometimes during years, or even generations, and not in one person alone but in a whole society.

"But," it will be said, "at all times, in all societies, the majority of persons—all the children, all the women absorbed in the bearing and rearing of the young, all the great mass of the labouring population, who are under the necessity of incessant and fatiguing physical labour, all those of weak character by nature, all those who are abnormally enfeebled intellectually by the effects of nicotine, alcohol, opium, or other intoxicants—are always in a condition of incapacity for independent thought, and are either in subjection to those who are on a higher intellectual level, or else under the influence of family or social traditions, of what is called public opinion, and there is nothing unnatural or incongruous in their subjection."

And truly there is nothing unnatural in it, and the tendency of men of small intellectual

power to follow the lead of those on a higher level of intelligence is a constant law, and it is owing to it that men can live in societies and on the same principles at all. The minority consciously adopt certain rational principles through their correspondence with reason, while the majority act on the same principles unconsciously because it is required by public opinion.

Such subjection to public opinion on the part of the unintellectual does not assume an unnatural character till the public opinion is split into two.

But there are times when a higher truth, revealed at first to a few persons, gradually gains ground till it has taken hold of such a number of persons that the old public opinion, founded on a lower order of truths, begins to totter and the new is ready to take its place, but has not yet been firmly established. It is like the spring, this time of transition, when the old order of ideas has not quite broken up and the new has not quite gained a footing. Men begin to criticise their actions in the light of the new truth, but in the meantime in practice, through inertia and tradition, they continue to follow the principles which once represented the highest point of rational consciousness, but are now in flagrant contradiction with it.

Then men are in an abnormal, wavering

condition, feeling the necessity of following the new ideal, and yet not bold enough to break with the old-established traditions.

Such is the attitude in regard to the truth of Christianity not only of the men in the Toula train, but of the majority of men of our times, alike of the higher and the lower orders.

Those of the ruling classes, having no longer any reasonable justification for the profitable positions they occupy, are forced, in order to keep them, to stifle their higher rational faculty of loving, and to persuade themselves that their positions are indispensable. And those of the lower classes, exhausted by toil and brutalised of set purpose, are kept in a permanent deception, practised deliberately and continuously by the higher classes upon them.

Only in this way can one explain the amazing contradictions with which our life is full, and of which a striking example was presented to me by the expedition I met on the 9th of September, good peaceful men, known to me personally, going with untroubled tranquillity to perpetrate the most beastly, senseless, and vile of crimes. Had not they some means of stifling their conscience not one of them would be capable of committing a hundredth part of such a villainy.

It is not that they have not a conscience which forbids them from acting thus, just as,

even three or four hundred years ago; when people burnt men at the stake and put them to the rack, they had a conscience which prohibited it. The conscience is there, but it has been put to sleep—in those in command by what the psychologists call auto-suggestion; in the soldiers, by the direct conscious hypnotising exerted by the higher classes.

Though asleep, the conscience is there, and in spite of the hypnotism it is already speaking in them and it may awake.

All these men are in a position like that of a man under hypnotism, commanded to do something opposed to everything he regards as good and rational, such as to kill his mother or his child. The hypnotised subject feels himself bound to carry out the suggestion—he thinks he cannot stop—but the nearer he gets to the time and the place of the action, the more the benumbed conscience begins to stir, to resist, and to try to awake. And no one can say beforehand whether he will carry out the suggestion or not; which will gain the upper hand, the rational conscience or the irrational suggestion. It all depends on their relative strength.

That is just the case with the men in the Toula train and in general with every one carrying out acts of state violence in our day.

There was a time when men who set out

with the object of murder and violence, to make an example, did not return till they had carried out their object, and then, untroubled by doubts or scruples, having calmly flogged men to death, they returned home, and caressed their children, laughed, amused themselves, and enjoyed the peaceful pleasures of family life. In those days it never struck the landowners and wealthy men who profited by these crimes, that the privileges they enjoyed had any direct connection with these atrocities. But now it is no longer so. Men know now, or are not far from knowing, what they are doing, and for what object they do it. They can shut their eyes and force their conscience to be still, but so long as their eyes are open and their conscience undulled, they must all—those who carry out and those who profit by these crimes alike—see the import of them. Sometimes they realise it only after the crime has been perpetrated, sometimes they realise just before its perpetration. Thus those who commanded the recent acts of violence in Nijni-Novgorod, Saratov, Orel, and the Yusovsky factory realised their significance only after their perpetration, and now those who commanded and those who carried out these crimes are ashamed before public opinion and their conscience. I have talked to soldiers who had taken part in these crimes, and they always studiously turned

the conversation off the subject, and when they spoke of it it was with horror and bewilderment. There are cases, too, when men come to themselves just before the perpetration of the crime. Thus I know the case of a sergeant-major who had been beaten by two peasants during the repression of disorder and had made a complaint. The next day, after seeing the atrocities perpetrated on the other peasants, he entreated the commander of his company to tear up his complaint and let off the two peasants. I know cases when soldiers, commanded to fire, have refused to obey, and I know many cases of officers who have refused to command expeditions for torture and murder. So that men sometimes come to their senses long before perpetrating the suggested crime, sometimes at the very moment before perpetrating it, sometimes only afterwards.

The men travelling in the Toula train were going with the object of killing and injuring their fellow-creatures, but none could tell whether they would carry out their object or not. However obscure his responsibility for the affair is to each, and however strong the idea instilled into all of them that they are not men, but governors, officials, officers, and soldiers, and as such beings can violate every human duty, the nearer they approach the place of the execution the stronger their doubts as to its being right, and this doubt

will reach its highest point when the very moment for carrying it out has come.

The governor, in spite of all the stupefying effect of his surroundings, cannot help hesitating when the moment comes to give the final decisive command. He knows that the action of the Governor of Orel has called down upon him the disapproval of the best people, and he himself, influenced by the public opinion of the circles in which he moves, has more than once expressed his disapprobation of him. He knows that the prosecutor, who ought to have come, flatly refused to have anything to do with it, because he regarded it as disgraceful. He knows, too, that there may be changes any day in the government, and that what was a ground for advancement yesterday may be the cause of disgrace to-morrow. And he knows that there is a press, if not in Russia, at least abroad, which may report the affair and cover him with ignominy for ever. He is already conscious of a change in public opinion which condemns what was formerly a duty. Moreover, he cannot feel fully assured that his soldiers will at the last moment obey him. He is wavering, and none can say beforehand what he will do.

All the officers and functionaries who accompany him experience in greater or less degree the same emotions. In the depths of their hearts they all know that what they

are doing is shameful, that to take part in it is a discredit and blemish in the eyes of some people whose opinion they value. They know that after murdering and torturing the defenceless each of them will be ashamed to face his betrothed or the woman he is courting. And besides, they too, like the governor, are doubtful whether the soldiers' obedience to orders can be reckoned on. What a contrast with the confident air they all put on as they sauntered about the station and platform! Inwardly they were not only in a state of suffering but even of suspense. Indeed they only assumed this bold and composed manner to conceal the wavering within. And this feeling increased as they drew near the scene of action.

And imperceptible as it was, and strange as it seems to say so, all that mass of lads, the soldiers, who seemed so submissive, were in precisely the same condition.

These are not the soldiers of former days, who gave up the natural life of industry and devoted their whole existence to debauchery, plunder, and murder, like the Roman legionaries or the warriors of the Thirty Years War, or even the soldiers of more recent times who served for twenty-five years in the army. They have mostly been only lately taken from their families and are full of the recollections of the good, rational, natural life they have left behind them.

All these lads, peasants for the most part, know what is the business they have come about; they know that the landowners always oppress their brothers the peasants, and that therefore it is most likely the same thing here. Moreover, a majority of them can now read, and the books they read are not all such as exalt a military life; there are some which point out its immorality. Among them are often free-thinking comrades—who have enlisted voluntarily—or young officers of liberal ideas, and already the first germ of doubt has been sown in regard to the unconditional legitimacy and glory of their occupation.

It is true that they have all passed through that terrible, skilful education, elaborated through centuries, which kills all initiative in a man, and that they are so trained to mechanical obedience that at the word of command: "Fire!—All the line!—Fire!" and so on, their guns will rise of themselves and the habitual movements will be performed. But "Fire!" now does not mean shooting into the sand for amusement, it means firing on their broken-down, exploited fathers and brothers whom they see there in the crowd, with women and children shouting and waving their arms. Here they are—one with his scanty beard and patched coat and plaited shoes of reed, just like the father left at home in Kazan or Riazan province—one with grey

beard and bent back leaning on a staff like the old grandfather—one, a young fellow in boots and a red shirt, just as he was himself a year ago—he the soldier who must fire upon him. There, too, a woman in reed shoes and *panyova*, just like the mother left at home.

Is it possible they must fire on them? And no one knows what each soldier will do at the last minute. The least word, the slightest allusion would be enough to stop them.

At the last moment they will all find themselves in the position of a hypnotised man to whom it has been suggested to chop a log, who coming up to what has been indicated to him as a log, with the axe already lifted to strike, sees that it is not a log but his sleeping brother. He may perform the act that has been suggested to him, and he may come to his senses at the moment of performing it. In the same way all these men may come to themselves in time or they may go on to the end.

If they do not come to themselves, the most fearful crime will be committed, as in Orel, and then the hypnotic suggestion under which they act will be strengthened in all other men. If they do come to themselves, not only this terrible crime will not be perpetrated, many also who hear of the turn the affair has taken will be emancipated from

the hypnotic influence in which they were held or, at least, will be nearer being emancipated from it.

Even if a few only come to themselves and boldly explain to the others all the wickedness of such a crime, the influence of these few may rouse the others to shake off the controlling suggestion, and the atrocity will not be perpetrated.

More than that, if a few men, even of those who are not taking part in the affair but are only present at the preparations for it or have heard of such things being done in the past, do not remain indifferent but boldly and plainly express their detestation of such crimes to those who have to execute them, and point out to them all the senselessness, cruelty and wickedness of such acts, that alone will be productive of good.

That was what took place in the instance before us. It was enough for a few men, some personally concerned in the affair and others simply outsiders, to express their disapproval of floggings that had taken place elsewhere, and their contempt and loathing for those who had taken part in inflicting them, for a few persons in the Toula case to express their repugnance to having any share in it ; for a lady travelling by the train and a few other bystanders at the station to express to those who formed the expedition their disgust at what they were doing ; for one of

the commanders of a company, who was asked for troops for the restoration of order, to reply that soldiers ought not to be butchers, —and, thanks to these and a few other seemingly insignificant influences brought to bear on these hypnotised men, the affair took a completely different turn, and the troops, when they reached the place, did not inflict any punishment, but contented themselves with cutting down the forest and giving it to the landowner.

Had not a few persons had a clear consciousness that what they were doing was wrong, and consequently influenced one another in that direction, what was done at Orel would have taken place at Toula. Had this consciousness been still stronger and had the influence been exerted therefore greater than it was, it might well have been that the governor with his troops would not even have ventured to cut down the forest and give it to the landowner. Had that consciousness been stronger still, it might well have been that the governor would not have ventured to go to the scene of action at all, even that the minister would not have ventured to form this decision or the Tsar to ratify it.

All depends, therefore, on the strength of the consciousness of Christian truth on the part of each individual man.

And therefore one would have thought that the efforts of all men of the present day

who profess to wish to work for the welfare of humanity would have been directed to strengthening this consciousness of Christian truth in themselves and others.

But, strange to say, it is precisely those people who profess most anxiety for the amelioration of human life and are regarded as the leaders of public opinion, who assert that there is no need to do that, and that there are other more effective means for the amelioration of men's condition. They affirm that the amelioration of human life is effected not by the efforts of individual men to recognise and propagate the truth, but by the gradual modification of the general conditions of life, and that therefore the efforts of individuals should be directed to the gradual modification of external conditions for the better. For every advocacy of a truth inconsistent with the existing order by an individual is, they maintain, not only useless but injurious, since it provokes coercive measures on the part of the authorities, restricting these individuals from continuing any action useful to society. According to this doctrine, all modifications in human life are brought about by precisely the same laws as in the life of the animals.

So that according to this doctrine all the founders of religions, such as Moses and the prophets, Confucius, Lao-Tse, Buddha, Christ, and others, preached their doctrines

and their followers accepted them not because they loved the truth, but because the political, social, and above all economic conditions of the peoples among whom these religions arose were favourable for their origination and development.

And therefore the chief efforts of the man who wishes to serve society and improve the condition of humanity ought, according to this doctrine, to be directed not to the elucidation and propagation of truth, but to the improvement of the external political, social, and above all economic conditions. And the modification of these conditions is partly effected by serving the government and introducing liberal and progressive principles into it, partly in promoting the development of industry and the propagation of socialistic ideas, and most of all by the diffusion of science. According to this theory it is of no consequence whether you profess the truth revealed to you, and therefore realise it in your life, or at least refrain from committing actions opposed to the truth, such as serving the government and strengthening its authority, when you regard it as injurious, profiting by the capitalistic system when you regard it as wrong, showing veneration for various ceremonies which you believe to be degrading superstitions, giving support to the law when you believe it to be founded on error, serving as a soldier, taking oaths, and

lying, and lowering yourself generally. It is useless to refrain from all that; what is of use is not altering the existing forms of life, but submitting to them against your own convictions, introducing liberalism into the existing institutions, promoting commerce, the propaganda of socialism, and the triumphs of what is called science, and the diffusion of education. According to this theory one can remain a landowner, merchant, manufacturer, judge, official in government pay, officer or soldier, and still be not only a humane man, but even a socialist and revolutionist.

Hypocrisy, which had formerly only a religious basis in the doctrine of original sin, the redemption and the church, has in our day gained a new scientific basis and has consequently caught in its nets all those who had reached too high a stage of development to be able to find support in religious hypocrisy. So that while in former days a man who professed the religion of the church could take part in all the crimes of the state, and profit by them, and still regard himself as free from any taint of sin, so long as he fulfilled the external observances of his creed, nowadays all who do not believe in the Christianity of the church, find similar well-founded irrefutable reasons in science for regarding themselves as blameless and even highly moral in spite of their participation in

the misdeeds of government and the advantages they gain from them.

A rich landowner—not only in Russia, but in France, England, Germany or America—lives on the rents exacted from the people living on his land, and robs these generally poverty-stricken people of all he can get from them. This man's right of property in the land rests on the fact that at every effort on the part of the oppressed people, without his consent, to make use of the land he considers his, troops are called out to subject them to punishment and murder. One would have thought that it was obvious that a man living in this way was an evil, egoistic creature and could not possibly consider himself a Christian or a liberal. One would have supposed it evident that the first thing such a man must do if he wishes to approximate to Christianity or liberalism would be to cease to plunder and ruin men by means of acts of state violence in support of his claim to the land. And so it would be if it were not for the logic of hypocrisy, which reasons that from a religious point of view possession or non-possession of land is of no consequence for salvation, and from the scientific point of view, giving up the ownership of land is a useless individual renunciation, and that the welfare of mankind is not promoted in that way, but by a gradual modification of external forms. And so we see this man, without the least trouble

of mind or doubt that people will believe in his sincerity, organising an agricultural exhibition, or a temperance society, or sending some soup and stockings by his wife or children to three old women, and boldly in his family, in drawing-rooms, in committees, and in the press, advocating the Gospel or humanitarian doctrine of love for one's neighbour in general and the agricultural labouring population in particular whom he is continually exploiting and oppressing. And other people who are in the same position as he, believe him, commend him, and solemnly discuss with him measures for ameliorating the condition of the working class, on whose exploitation their whole life rests, devising all kinds of possible methods for this, except the one without which all improvement of their condition is impossible—*i.e.*, refraining from taking from them the land necessary for their subsistence. (A striking example of this hypocrisy was the solicitude displayed by the Russian landowners last year, their efforts to combat the famine which they had caused, and by which they profited, selling not only bread at the highest price, but even potato haulm at five roubles the dessiatine (about $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres) for fuel to the freezing peasants.)

Or take a merchant whose whole trade—like all trade indeed—is founded on a series of trickery, by means of which, profiting by the ignorance or need of others, he buys

goods below their value and sells them again above their value. One would have fancied it obvious that a man whose whole occupation was based on what in his own language is called swindling if it is done under other conditions, ought to be ashamed of his position, and could not any way, while he continues a merchant, profess himself a Christian or a liberal.

But the sophistry of hypocrisy reasons that the merchant can pass for a virtuous man without giving up his pernicious course of action : a religious man need only have faith and a liberal man need only promote the modification of external conditions—the progress of industry. And so we see the merchant (who often goes further and commits acts of direct dishonesty, selling adulterated goods, using false weights and measures, and trading in products injurious to health, such as alcohol and opium) boldly regarding himself and being regarded by others, so long as he does not directly deceive his colleagues in business, as a pattern of probity and virtue. And if he spends a thousandth part of his stolen wealth on some public institution, a hospital, or museum, or school, then he is even regarded as the benefactor of the people on the exploitation and corruption of whom his whole prosperity has been founded ; if he sacrifices, too, a portion of his ill-gotten gains on a church and the poor, then he is an exemplary Christian.

A manufacturer is a man whose whole income consists of value squeezed out of the workmen, and whose whole occupation is based on forced, unnatural labour, exhausting whole generations of men. It would seem obvious that if this man professes any Christian or liberal principles, he must first of all give up ruining human lives for his own profit. But by the existing theory he is promoting industry, and he ought not to abandon his pursuit. It would even be injuring society for him to do so. And so we see this man, the harsh slave-driver of thousands of men, building almshouses with little gardens two yards square for the workmen broken down in toiling for him, and a bank, and a poorhouse, and a hospital—fully persuaded that he has amply expiated in this way for all the human lives morally and physically ruined by him—and calmly going on with his business, taking pride in it.

Any civil, religious, or military official in government employ, who serves the state from vanity, or, as is most often the case, simply for the sake of the pay wrung from the harassed and toilworn working classes (all taxes, however raised, always fall on labour), if he, as is very seldom the case, does not directly rob the government in the usual way, considers himself, and is considered by his fellows, as a most useful and virtuous member of society.

A judge or a public prosecutor knows that through his sentence or his prosecution hundreds, or thousands of poor wretches are at once torn from their families and thrown into prison, where they may go out of their minds, kill themselves with pieces of broken glass, or starve themselves; he knows that they have wives and mothers and children, disgraced and made miserable by separation from them, vainly begging for pardon for them or some alleviation of their sentence, and this judge or this prosecutor is so hardened in his hypocrisy that he and his fellows and his wife and his household are all fully convinced that he may be a most exemplary man. According to the metaphysics of hypocrisy it is held that he is doing a work of public utility. And this man who has ruined hundreds, thousands of men, who curse him and are driven to desperation by his action, goes to mass, a smile of shining benevolence on his smooth face, in perfect faith in good and in God, listens to the Gospel, caresses his children, preaches moral principles to them, and is moved by imaginary sufferings.

All these men and those who depend on them, their wives, tutors, children, cooks, actors, jockeys, and so on, are living on the blood which by one means or another, through one set of blood-suckers or another, is drawn out of the working class, and every day their pleasures cost hundreds or

thousands of days of labour. They see the sufferings and privations of these labourers and their children, their aged, their wives, and their sick, they know the punishments inflicted on those who resist this organised plunder, and, far from decreasing, far from concealing their luxury, they insolently display it before these oppressed labourers who hate them, as though intentionally provoking them with the pomp of their parks and palaces, their theatres, hunts, and races. At the same time they continue to persuade themselves and others that they are all much concerned about the welfare of these working classes, whom they are always trampling under their feet, and on Sundays, richly dressed, they drive in sumptuous carriages to the houses of God built in very mockery of Christianity, and there listen to men, trained to this work of deception, who in white neckties or in brocaded vestments according to their denomination, preach the love for their neighbour which they all gainsay in their lives. And these people have so entered into their part that they seriously believe that they really are what they pretend to be.

The universal hypocrisy has so entered into the flesh and blood of all classes of our modern society, it has reached such a pitch that nothing in that way can rouse indignation. Hypocrisy in the Greek means "acting," and acting—playing a part—is always

possible. The representatives of Christ give their blessing to the ranks of murderers holding their guns loaded against their brothers, "for prayer," priests, ministers of various Christian sects are always present, as indispensably as the hangman, at executions, and sanction by their presence the compatibility of murder with Christianity (a clergyman assisted at the attempt at murder by electricity in America)—but such facts cause no one any surprise.

There was recently held at Petersburg an international exhibition of instruments of torture, handcuffs, models of solitary cells—that is to say, instruments of torture worse than knouts or rods—and sensitive ladies and gentlemen went and amused themselves by looking at them.

No one is surprised that, together with its recognition of liberty, equality and fraternity, liberal science should prove the necessity of war, punishment, customs, the censure, the regulation of prostitution, the exclusion of cheap foreign labourers, the hindrance of emigration, the justifiableness of colonisation based on poisoning and destroying whole races of men called savages, and so on.

People talk of the time when all men shall profess what is called Christianity (that is, various professions of faith hostile to one another), when all shall be well-fed and clothed, when all shall be united from one

end of the world to the other by telegraphs and telephones, and be able to communicate by balloons, when all the working classes are permeated by socialistic doctrines, when the trades-unions possess so many millions of members and so many millions of roubles, when every one is educated and all can read newspapers and learn all the sciences.

But what good or useful thing can come of all these improvements, if men do not speak and act in accordance with what they believe to be the truth?

The condition of men is the result of their disunion. Their disunion results from their not following the truth, which is one; but falsehoods, which are many. The sole means of uniting men is their union in the truth. And, therefore, the more sincerely men strive towards the truth the nearer they get to unity.

But how can men be united in the truth, or even approximate to it, if they do not even express the truth they know, but hold that there is no need to do so, and pretend to regard as truth what they believe to be false?

And therefore no improvement is possible so long as men are hypocritical and hide the truth from themselves, so long as they do not recognise that their union and therefore their welfare is only possible in the truth, and do not put the recognition and profession

of the truth revealed to them higher than everything else.

All the material improvements that religious and scientific men can dream of may be accomplished, all men may accept Christianity, and all the reforms desired by the Bellamys may be brought about with every possible addition and improvement: but if the hypocrisy which rules nowadays still exists, if men do not profess the truth they know, but continue to feign belief in what they do not believe, and veneration for what they do not respect, their condition will remain the same, or even grow worse and worse. The more men are freed from privation; the more telegraphs, telephones, books, papers and journals there are; the more means there will be of diffusing inconsistent lies and hypocrisies, and the more disunited and consequently miserable will men become, which indeed is what we see actually taking place.

All these material reforms may be realised, but the position of humanity will not be improved. But only let each man according to his powers at once, realise in his life the truth he knows, or at least cease to support the falsehoods he is supporting in the place of the truth, and at once, in this year 1893, we should see such reforms as we do not dare to hope for within a century—the emancipation of men, and the reign of truth upon earth.

Not without good reason was Christ's only harsh and threatening reproof directed against hypocrites and hypocrisy. It is not theft, nor robbery, nor murder, nor fornication, but falsehood, the special falsehood of hypocrisy, which corrupts men, brutalises them and makes them vindictive, destroys all distinction between right and wrong in their conscience, deprives them of what is the true meaning of all real human life, and debars them from all progress towards perfection.

Those who do evil through ignorance of the truth provoke sympathy with their victims and repugnance for their actions, they do harm only to those they attack; but those who know the truth and do evil masked by hypocrisy, injure themselves and their victims and thousands of other men as well, who are led astray by the falsehood with which the wrongdoing is disguised.

Thieves, robbers, murderers, and cheats who commit crimes recognised by themselves and every one else as evil, serve as an example of what ought not to be done, and deter others from similar crimes. But those who commit the same thefts, robberies, murders and other crimes, disguising them under all kinds of religious or scientific or humanitarian justifications, as all landowners, merchants, manufacturers and government officials do, provoke others to imitation, and so do harm not only to those who are directly the victims of their crimes,

but to thousands and millions of men whom they corrupt by obliterating their sense of the distinction between right and wrong.

A single fortune gained by trading in goods necessary to the people or in goods pernicious in their effects, or by financial speculations, or by acquiring land at a low price the value of which is increased by the needs of the population, or by an industry ruinous to the health and life of those employed in it, or by military or civil service of the state, or by any employment which trades on men's evil instincts—a single fortune acquired in any of these ways, not only with the sanction, but even with the approbation of the leading men in society, and masked with an ostentation of philanthropy, corrupts men incomparably more than millions of thefts and robberies committed against the recognised forms of law and punishable as crimes.

A single execution carried out by prosperous educated men uninfluenced by passion, with the approbation and assistance of Christian ministers, and represented as something necessary and even just, is infinitely more corrupting and brutalising to men than thousands of murders committed by uneducated working people under the influence of passion. An execution such as was proposed by Joukovsky which would produce even a sentiment of religious emotion in the spectators would be one of the most perverting

actions imaginable. (*See* vol. iv. of the works of Joukovsky.)

Every war, even the most humanely conducted, with all its ordinary consequences, the destruction of harvests, robberies, the licence and debauchery, and the murder with the justifications of its necessity and justice, the exaltation and glorification of military exploits, the worship of the flag, the patriotic sentiments, the feigned solicitude for the wounded, and so on, do more in one year to pervert men's minds than thousands of robberies, murders and arsons perpetrated during hundreds of years by individual men under the influence of passion.

The luxurious expenditure of a single respectable, and so-called honourable, family, even within the conventional limits, consuming as it does the produce of as many days of labour as would suffice to provide for thousands living in privation near, does more to pervert men's minds than thousands of the violent orgies of coarse tradespeople, officers, and workmen of drunken and debauched habits, who smash up glasses and crockery for amusement.

One solemn religious procession, one service, one sermon from the altar-steps or the pulpit, in which the preacher does not believe, produces incomparably more evil than thousands of swindling tricks, adulteration of food and so on.

We talk of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. But the hypocrisy of our society far surpasses the comparatively innocent hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They had at least an external religious law, the fulfilment of which hindered them from seeing their obligations to their neighbours. Moreover these obligations were not nearly so clearly defined in their day. Nowadays we have no such religious law to exonerate us from our duties to our neighbours (I am not speaking now of the coarse and ignorant persons who still fancy their sins can be absolved by confession to a priest or by the absolution of the Pope). On the contrary the law of the Gospel which we all profess in one form or another directly defines these duties. Besides, the duties which had then been only vaguely and mystically expressed by a few prophets have now been so clearly formulated, have become such truisms, that they are repeated even by schoolboys and journalists. And so it would seem that men of to-day cannot pretend that they do not know these duties.

A man of the modern world who profits by the order of things based on violence and at the same time protests that he loves his neighbour and does not observe what he is doing in his daily life to his neighbour, is like a brigand who has spent his life in robbing men, and who, caught at last, knife in hand, in the very act of striking his shrieking

victim, should declare that he had no idea that what he was doing was disagreeable to the man he had robbed and was prepared to murder. Just as this robber and murderer could not deny what was evident to every one, so it would seem that a man living upon the privations of the oppressed classes cannot persuade himself and others that he desires the welfare of those he plunders, and that he does not know how the advantages he enjoys are obtained.

It is impossible to convince ourselves that we do not know that there are a hundred thousand men in prison in Russia alone to guarantee the security of our property and tranquillity, and that we do not know of the law tribunals in which we take part, and which, at our initiative, condemn those who have attacked our property or our security to prison, exile, or forced labour, whereby men, no worse than those who condemn them, are ruined and corrupted ; or that we do not know that we only possess all that we do possess because it has been acquired and is defended for us by murder and violence.

We cannot pretend that we do not see the armed policeman who marches up and down beneath our windows to guarantee our security while we eat our luxurious dinner, or look at the new piece at the theatre, or that we are unaware of the existence of the soldiers who will make their appearance with

guns and cartridges directly our property is attacked.

We know very well that we are only allowed to go on eating our dinner, to finish seeing the new play, or to enjoy to the end the ball, the Christmas fête, the promenade, the races or the hunt, thanks to the policeman's revolver or the soldier's rifle which will shoot down the famished outcast who has been robbed of his share, and who looks round the corner with covetous eyes at our pleasures, ready to interrupt them instantly, were not the policeman and the soldier there prepared to run up at our first call for help.

And therefore just as a brigand caught in broad daylight in the act cannot persuade us that he did not lift his knife in order to rob his victim of his purse, and had no thought of killing him, we too, it would seem, cannot persuade ourselves or others that the soldiers and policemen around us are not to guard us, but only for defence against foreign foes, and to regulate traffic and fêtes and reviews; we cannot persuade ourselves and others that we do not know that men do not like dying of hunger, bereft of the right to gain their subsistence from the earth on which they live, that they do not like working underground, in the water, or in stifling heat, for ten to fourteen hours a day, at night in factories to manufacture objects for our pleasure. One would

imagine it impossible to deny what is so obvious. Yet it is denied.

Still, there are, among the rich, especially among the young, and among women, persons whom I am glad to meet more and more frequently, who, when they are shown in what way and at what cost their pleasures are purchased, do not try to conceal the truth, but, hiding their heads in their hands, cry : "Ah ! don't speak of that. If it is so, life is impossible." But though there are such sincere people who, even though they cannot renounce their fault, at least see it, the vast majority of the men of the modern world have so entered into the parts they play in their hypocrisy that they boldly deny what is staring every one in the face.

"All that is unjust," they say ; "no one forces the people to work for the landowners and manufacturers. That is an affair of free contract. Great properties and fortunes are necessary because they provide and organise work for the working classes. And labour in the factories and workshops is not at all the terrible thing you make it out to be. Even if there are some abuses in factories, the government and the public are taking steps to obviate them and to make the labour of the factory workers much easier, and even agreeable. The working classes are accustomed to physical labour, and are, so far, fit for nothing else. The poverty of the people is not the

result of private property in land, nor of capitalistic oppression, but of other causes: it is the result of the ignorance, brutality, and intemperance of the people. And we men in authority who are striving against this impoverishment of the people by wise legislation; we capitalists who are combating it by the extension of useful inventions; we clergymen, by religious instruction; and we liberals by the formation of trades-unions and the diffusion of education, are in this way increasing the prosperity of the people without changing our own positions. We do not want all to be as poor as the poor, we want all to be as rich as the rich. As for the assertion that men are ill-treated and murdered to force them to work for the profit of the rich, that is a sophism. The army is only called out against the mob when the people, in ignorance of their own interests, make disturbances and destroy the tranquillity necessary for the public welfare. In the same way, too, it is necessary to keep in restraint the malefactors for whom the prisons and gallows are established. We ourselves wish to suppress these forms of punishment and are working in that direction."

Hypocrisy in our day is supported on two sides: by false religion and by false science. And it has reached such proportions that if we were not living in its midst, we could not believe that men could attain such

a pitch of self-deception. Men of the present day have come into such an extraordinary condition, their hearts are so hardened that seeing they see not, hearing they do not hear, and understand not.

Men have long been living in antagonism to their conscience. If it were not for hypocrisy they could not go on living such a life. This social organisation in opposition to their conscience only continues to exist because it is disguised by hypocrisy.

And the greater the divergence between actual life and men's conscience the greater the extension of hypocrisy. But even hypocrisy has its limits. And it seems to me that we have reached those limits in the present day.

Every man of the present day with the Christian principles assimilated involuntarily in his conscience, finds himself in precisely the position of a man asleep, who dreams that he is obliged to do something which even in his dream he knows he ought not to do. He knows this in the depths of his conscience and all the same he seems unable to change his position, he cannot stop and cease doing what he ought not to do. And, just as in a dream, his position becoming more and more painful, at last reaches such a pitch of intensity that he begins sometimes to doubt the reality of what is passing and makes a moral effort to shake off the nightmare which is oppressing him.

This is just the condition of the average man of our Christian society. He feels that all that he does himself and that is done around him is something absurd, hideous, impossible and opposed to his conscience; he feels that his position is becoming more and more unendurable and reaching a crisis of intensity.

It is not possible that we modern men, with the Christian sense of human dignity and equality permeating us soul and body, with our need for peaceful association and unity between nations, should really go on living in such a way that every joy, every gratification we have is bought by the sufferings, by the lives of our brother men, and moreover that we should be every instant within a hair's-breadth of falling on one another, nation against nation, like wild beasts, mercilessly destroying men's lives and labour, only because some benighted diplomatist or ruler says or writes some stupidity to another equally benighted diplomatist or ruler.

It is impossible. Yet every man of our day sees that this is so and awaits the calamity. And the situation becomes more and more insupportable.

And as the man who is dreaming does not believe that what appears to him can be truly the reality and tries to wake up to the actual real world again, so the average man of

modern days cannot in the bottom of his heart believe that the awful position in which he is placed and which is growing worse and worse can be the reality, and tries to wake up to a true, real life, as it exists in his conscience.

And just as the dreamer need only make a moral effort and ask himself, "Isn't it a dream?" and the situation which seemed to him so hopeless will instantly disappear, and he will wake up to peaceful and happy reality; so the man of the modern world need only make a moral effort to doubt the reality presented to him by his own hypocrisy and the general hypocrisy around him, and to ask himself, "Isn't it all a delusion?" and he will at once, like the dreamer awakened, feel himself transported from an imaginary and dreadful world, to the true, calm, and happy reality.

And to do this a man need accomplish no great feats or exploits, he need only make a moral effort.

But can a man make this effort?

According to the existing theory so essential to support hypocrisy, man is not free and cannot change his life.

"Man cannot change his life because he is not free; he is not free because all his actions are conditioned by previously existing causes. And whatever the man may do there are always some causes or other through which

he does these or those acts, and therefore man cannot be free and change his life," say the champions of the metaphysics of hypocrisy. And they would be perfectly right if man were a creature without conscience and incapable of moving towards the truth; that is to say, if after recognising a new truth, man always remained at the same stage of moral development. But man is a creature with a conscience and capable of attaining a higher and higher degree of truth. And therefore even if man is not free as regards performing these or those acts because there exists a previous cause for every act, the very causes of his acts, consisting as they do for the man of conscience of the recognition of this or that truth, are within his own control.

So that though man may not be free as regards the performance of his actions, he is free as regards the foundation on which they are performed. Just as the mechanician who is not free to modify the movement of his locomotive, when it is in motion, is free to regulate the machine beforehand so as to determine what the movement is to be.

Whatever the conscious man does, he acts just as he does and not otherwise, only because he recognises that to act as he is acting is in accord with the truth, or because he has recognised it at some previous time, and is now only through inertia, through habit,

acting in accordance with his previous recognition of truth.

In any case the cause of his action is not to be found in any given previous fact, but in the consciousness of a given relation to truth, and the consequent recognition of this or that fact as a sufficient basis for action.

Whether a man eats or does not eat, works or rests, runs risks or avoids them, if he has a conscience he acts thus only because he considers it right and rational, because he considers that to act thus is in harmony with truth, or else because he has made this reflection in the past.

The recognition or non-recognition of a certain truth depends not on external causes, but on certain other causes within the man himself. So that at times, under external conditions apparently very favourable for the recognition of truth, one man will not recognise it, and another, on the contrary, under the most unfavourable conditions will, without apparent cause, recognise it. As it is said in the Gospel, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." That is to say, the recognition of truth, which is the cause of all the manifestations of human life, does not depend on external phenomena, but on certain inner spiritual characteristics of the man which escape our observation.

And, therefore, man, though not free in his

acts, always feels himself free in what is the motive of his acts—the recognition or non-recognition of truth. And he feels himself independent not only of facts external to his own personality, but even of his own actions.

Thus a man who under the influence of passion has committed an act contrary to the truth he recognises, remains none the less free to recognise it or not to recognise it; that is, he can by refusing to recognise the truth regard his action as necessary and justifiable, or he may recognise the truth and regard his act as wrong and censure himself for it.

Thus a gambler or a drunkard who does not resist temptation and yields to his passion is still free to recognise gambling and drunkenness as wrong or to regard them as a harmless pastime. In the first case, even if he does not at once get over his passion, he gets the more free from it the more sincerely he recognises the truth about it; in the second case, he will be strengthened in his vice and will deprive himself of every possibility of shaking it off.

In the same way a man who has made his escape alone from a house on fire, not having had the courage to save his friend, remains free, recognising the truth that a man ought to save the life of another even at the risk of his own, to regard his action as bad and to censure himself for it; or, not recog-

nising this truth, to regard his action as natural and necessary, and to justify it to himself. In the first case, if he recognises the truth in spite of his departure from it, he prepares for himself in the future a whole series of acts of self-sacrifice necessarily flowing from this recognition of the truth; in the second case, a whole series of egoistic acts.

Not that a man is always free to recognise or to refuse, to recognise every truth. There are truths which he has recognised long before, or which have been handed down to him by education and tradition and accepted by him on faith, and to follow these truths has become a habit, a second nature, with him; and there are truths, only vaguely, as it were distantly, apprehended by him. The man is not free to refuse to recognise the first, nor to recognise the second class of truths. But there are truths of a third kind, which have not yet become an unconscious motive of action, but yet have been revealed so clearly to him that he cannot pass them by, and is inevitably obliged to do one thing or the other—to recognise or not to recognise them. And it is in regard to these truths that the man's freedom manifests itself.

Every man during his life finds himself in regard to truth in the position of a man walking in the darkness with light thrown before him by the lantern he carries. He

does not see what is not yet lighted up by the lantern ; he does not see what he has passed which is hidden in the darkness ; but at every stage of his journey he sees what is lighted up by the lantern and he can always choose one side or the other of the road.

There are always unseen truths not yet revealed to the man's intellectual vision, and there are other truths outlived, forgotten and assimilated by him, and there are also certain truths that rise up before the light of his reason and require his recognition. And it is in the recognition or non-recognition of these truths that what we call his freedom is manifested.

All the difficulty and seeming insolubility of the question of the freedom of man results from those who tried to solve the question, imagining man as stationary in his relation to the truth.

Man is certainly not free if we imagine him stationary, and if we forget that the life of a man and of humanity is nothing but a continual movement from darkness into light, from a lower stage of truth to a higher, from a truth more alloyed with errors to a truth more purified from them.

Man would not be free if he knew no truth at all, and in the same way he would not be free and would not even have any idea of freedom, if the whole truth which was to guide him in life had been revealed once for all to

him in all its purity without any admixture of error.

But man is not stationary in regard to truth, but every individual man as he passes through life, and humanity as a whole in the same way, is continually learning to know a greater and greater degree of truth, and growing more and more free from error.

And therefore men are in a threefold relation to truth. Some truths have been so assimilated by them that they have become the unconscious basis of action, others are only just on the point of being revealed to him, and a third class, though not yet assimilated by him, have been revealed to him with sufficient clearness to force him to decide either to recognise them or to refuse to recognise them.

These, then, are the truths which man is free to recognise or to refuse to recognise.

The liberty of man does not consist in the power of acting independently of the progress of life and the influences arising from it, but in the capacity for recognising and acknowledging the truth revealed to him, and becoming the free and joyful participator in the eternal and infinite work of God, the life of the world ; or, on the other hand, for refusing to recognise the truth, and so being a miserable and reluctant slave dragged whither he has no desire to go.

Truth not only points out the way along which human life ought to move, but reveals also the only way along which it can move. And therefore all men must willingly or unwillingly move along the way of truth, some spontaneously accomplishing the task set them in life, others submitting involuntarily to the law of life. Man's freedom lies in the power of this choice.

This freedom within these narrow limits seems so insignificant to men that they do not notice it. Some—the determinists—consider this amount of freedom so trifling that they do not recognise it at all. Others—the champions of complete free will—keep their eyes fixed on their hypothetical free will and neglect this which seemed to them such a trivial degree of freedom.

This freedom, confined between the limits of complete ignorance of the truth and a recognition of a part of the truth, seems hardly freedom at all, especially since, whether a man is willing or unwilling to recognise the truth revealed to him, he will be inevitably forced to carry it out in life.

A horse harnessed with others to a cart is not free to refrain from moving the cart. If he does not move forward the cart will knock him down and go on dragging him with it whether he will or not. But the horse is free to drag the cart himself or to be dragged with it. And so it is with man.

Whether this is a great or small degree of freedom in comparison with the fantastic liberty we should like to have, it is the only freedom that really exists, and in it consists the happiness attainable by man.

And more than that, this freedom is the sole means of accomplishing the Divine work of the life of the world.

According to Christ's doctrine, the man who sees the significance of life in the domain in which it is not free, in the domain of effects—that is, of acts—has not the true life. According to the Christian doctrine, that man is living in the truth who has transported his life to the domain in which it is free—the domain of causes : that, is the knowledge and recognition, the profession and realisation in life of revealed truth,

Devoting his life to works of the flesh, a man busies himself with actions depending on temporary causes outside himself. He himself does nothing really, he merely seems to be doing something. In reality all the acts which seem to be his are the work of a higher power, and he is not the creator of his own life, but the slave of it. Devoting his life to the recognition and fulfilment of the truth revealed to him, he identifies himself with the source of universal life and accomplishes acts not personal, and dependent on conditions of space and time, but acts unconditioned by previous causes—

acts which constitute the causes of everything else, and have an infinite, unlimited significance.

"The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matt. xi. 12.)

It is this violent effort to rise above external conditions to the recognition and realisation of truth by which the Kingdom of Heaven is taken, and it is this effort of violence which must and can be made in our times.

Men need only understand this, they need only cease to trouble themselves about the general external conditions in which they are not free, and devote one-hundredth part of the energy they waste on those material things to that in which they are free, to the recognition and realisation of the truth which is before them, and to the liberation of themselves and others from deception and hypocrisy, and, without effort or conflict, there would be an end at once of the false organisation of life which makes men miserable, and threatens them with worse calamities in the future. And then the Kingdom of God would be realised, or at least that first stage of it for which men are ready now by the degree of development of their conscience.

Just as a single shock may be sufficient when a liquid is saturated with some salt to

precipitate it at once in crystals, a slight effort may be perhaps all that is needed now that the truth already revealed to men may gain a mastery over hundreds, thousands, millions of men, that a public opinion consistent with conscience may be established, and through this change of public opinion the whole order of life may be transformed. And it depends upon us to make this effort.

Let each of us only try to understand and accept the Christian truth which in the most varied forms surrounds us on all sides and forces itself upon us ; let us only cease from lying and pretending that we do not see this truth or wish to realise it, at least in what it demands from us above all else ; only let us accept and boldly profess the truth to which we are called, and we should find at once that hundreds, thousands, millions of men are in the same position as we—that they see the truth as we do, and dread as we do to stand alone in recognising it, and like us are only waiting for others to recognise it also.

Only let men cease to be hypocrites, and they would at once see that this cruel social organisation, which holds them in bondage, and is represented to them as something stable, necessary, and ordained of God, is already tottering, and is only propped up by the falsehood of hypocrisy, with which we, and others like us, support it.

But if this is so, if it is true that it depends on us to break down the existing organisation of life, have we the right to destroy it, without knowing clearly what we shall set up in its place? What will become of human society when the existing order of things is at an end?

"What shall we find the other side of the walls of the world we are abandoning?

"Fear will come upon us—a void, a vast emptiness, freedom—how are we to go forward not knowing whither, how face loss not seeing hope of gain? If Columbus had reasoned thus he would never have weighed anchor. It was madness to set off upon the ocean not knowing the route, on the ocean on which no one had sailed, to sail towards a land whose existence was doubtful. By this madness he discovered a new world. Doubtless if the peoples of the world could simply transfer themselves from one furnished mansion to another and better one—it would make it much easier; but unluckily there is no one to get humanity's new dwelling ready for it. The future is even worse than the ocean—there is nothing there—it will be what men and circumstances make it.

"If you are content with the old world, try to preserve it, it is very sick and cannot hold out much longer. But if you cannot bear to live in everlasting dissonance between your beliefs and your life, thinking one thing and

doing another, get out of the mediæval whited sepulchres, and face your fears. I know very well it is not easy.

"It is not a little thing to cut oneself off from all to which a man has been accustomed from his birth, with which he has grown up to maturity. Men are ready for tremendous sacrifices, but not for those which life demands of them. Are they ready to sacrifice modern civilisation, their manner of life, their religion, the received conventional morality?

"Are we ready to give up all the results we have attained with such effort, results of which we have been boasting for three centuries—to give up every convenience and charm of our existence, to prefer savage youth to the senile decay of civilisation, to pull down the palace raised for us by our ancestors only for the pleasure of having a hand in the founding of a new house, which will doubtless be built long after we are gone?" (Herzen, vol. v. p. 55.)

Thus wrote almost half a century ago the Russian writer who, with prophetic insight, saw clearly then, what even the most unreflecting man sees to-day—the impossibility, that is, of life continuing on its old basis, and the necessity of establishing new forms of life.

It is clear now from the very simplest, most commonplace point of view, that it is madness to remain under the roof of a

building which cannot support its weight, and that we must leave it. And indeed it is difficult to imagine a position more wretched than that of the Christian world to-day, with its nations armed against one another, with its constantly increasing taxation to maintain its armies, with the hatred of the working class for the rich ever growing more intense, with the Damocles sword of war for ever hanging over the heads of all, ready every instant to fall, certain to fall sooner or later.

Hardly could any revolution be more disastrous for the great mass of the population than the present order or rather disorder of our life, with its daily sacrifices to exhausting and unnatural toil, to poverty, drunkenness and profligacy, with all the horrors of the war that is at hand, which will swallow up in one year more victims than all the revolutions of the century.

What will become of humanity if each of us performs the duty God demands of us through the conscience implanted within us? Will not harm come if, being wholly in the power of a master, I carry out, in the workshop erected and directed by him, the orders he gives me, strange though they may seem to me who do not know the Master's final aims?

But it is not even this question "What will happen?" that agitates men when they hesitate

to fulfil the Master's will. They are troubled by the question how to live without those habitual conditions of life which we call civilisation, culture, art, and science. We feel ourselves all the burdensomeness of life as it is ; we see also that this organisation of life must inevitably be our ruin, if it continues. At the same time we want the conditions of our life which arise out of this organisation—our civilisation, culture, art, and science—to remain intact. It is as though a man, living in an old house and suffering from cold and all sorts of inconvenience in it, knowing, too, that it is on the point of falling to pieces, should consent to its being rebuilt, but only on the condition that he should not be required to leave it—a condition which is equivalent to refusing to have it rebuilt at all.

“But what if I leave the house and give up every convenience for a time, and the new house is not built, or is built on a different plan so that I do not find in it the comforts to which I am accustomed ?” But seeing that the materials and the builders are here, there is every likelihood that the new house will, on the contrary, be better built than the old one. And at the same time, there is not only the likelihood but the certainty that the old house will fall down and crush those who remain within it. Whether the old habitual conditions of life are supported, or whether they are

abolished and altogether new and better conditions arise—in any case, there is no doubt we shall be forced to leave the old forms of life which have become impossible and fatal, and must go forward to meet the future.

“Civilisation, art, science, culture, will disappear!”

Yes, but all these we know are only various manifestations of truth, and the change that is before us is only to be made for the sake of a closer attainment and realisation of truth. How, then, can the manifestations of truth disappear through our realising it? These manifestations will be different, higher, better, but they will not cease to be. Only what is false in them will be destroyed; all the truth there was in them will only be stronger and more flourishing.

Take thought, O men, and have faith in the Gospel, in whose teaching is your happiness. If you do not take thought, you will perish just as the men perished, slain by Pilate, or crushed by the tower of Siloam, as millions and millions of men have perished, slayers and slain, executing and executed, torturers and tortured alike, and as the man foolishly perished who filled his granaries full and made ready for a long life and died the very night that he planned to begin his life. Take thought and have faith in the Gospel, Christ said 1800 years ago,

and He says it with even greater force now that the calamities foretold by him have come to pass, and the senselessness of our life has reached the furthest point of suffering and madness.

Nowadays, after so many centuries of fruitless efforts to make our life secure by the pagan organisation of life, it must be evident to every one that all efforts in that direction only introduce fresh dangers into personal and social life, and do not render it more secure in any way.

Whatever names we dignify ourselves with, whatever uniforms we wear, whatever priests we anoint ourselves before, however many millions we possess, however many guards are stationed along our road, however many policemen guard our wealth, however many so-called criminals, revolutionists, and anarchists we punish, whatever exploits we have performed, whatever states we may have founded, fortresses and towers we may have erected—from Babel to the Eiffel Tower—there are two inevitable conditions of life confronting all of us which destroy its whole meaning: (1) death, which may at any moment pounce upon each of us; and (2) the transitoriness of all our works, which so soon pass away and leave no trace. Whatever we may do—found companies, build palaces and monuments, write songs and poems—it is all not for long time. Soon it passes

away, leaving no trace. And therefore, however we may conceal it from ourselves, we cannot help seeing that the significance of our life cannot lie in our personal fleshly existence, the prey of incurable suffering and inevitable death, nor in any social institution or organisation. Whoever you may be who are reading these lines, think of your position and of your duties—not of your position as landowner, merchant, judge, emperor, president, minister, priest, soldier, which has been temporarily allotted you by men, and not of the imaginary duties laid on you by those positions, but of your real position in eternity as a creature who at the will of Some One has been called out of unconsciousness after an eternity of non-existence to which you may return at any moment at His will. Think of your duties—not your supposed duties as a landowner to your estate, as a merchant to your business, as emperor, minister or official to the state, but of your real duties, the duties that follow from your real position as a being called into life and endowed with reason and love.

Are you doing what He demands of you who has sent you into the world, and to whom you will soon return? Are you doing what He wills? Are you doing His will, when as landowner or manufacturer you rob the poor of the fruits of their toil, basing your life on this plunder of the workers, or when as judge

or governor, you illtreat men, sentence them to execution, or when as soldiers you prepare for war, kill and plunder ?

You will say that the world is so made that this is inevitable, and that you do not do this of your own freewill, but because you are forced to do so. But can it be that you have such a strong aversion to men's sufferings, ill-treatment, and murder—that you have such an intense need of love and co-operation with your fellows that you see clearly that only by the recognition of the equality of all, and by mutual services, can the greatest possible happiness be realised ; that your head and your heart, the faith you profess, and even science itself tell you the same thing ; and yet that, in spite of it all, you can be forced by some confused and complicated reasoning to act in direct opposition to all this—that as landowner or capitalist you are bound to base your whole life on the oppression of the people ; that as emperor or president to command armies—that is, to be the head and commander of murderers ; or that as government official you are forced to take from the poor their last pence for rich men to profit and share them among themselves ; or that as judge or jurymen you could be forced to sentence erring men to ill-treatment and death because the truth was not revealed to them ; or above all—for that is the basis of all the evil—that you could be forced to

become a soldier, and, renouncing your free-will and your human sentiments, could undertake to kill any one at the command of other men?

It cannot be.

Even if you are told that all this is necessary for the maintenance of the existing order of things, and that this social order with its pauperism, famines, prisons, gallows, armies, and wars is necessary to society; that still greater disasters would ensue if this organisation were destroyed; all that is said only by those who profit by this organisation, whilst those who suffer from it—and they are ten times as numerous—think and say quite the contrary. And at the bottom of your heart you know yourself that it is not true, that the existing organisation has outlived its time, and must inevitably be reconstructed on new principles, and that consequently there is no obligation upon you to sacrifice your sentiments of humanity to support it.

Above all, even if you allow that this organisation is necessary, why do you believe it to be your duty to maintain it at the cost of your best feelings? Who has made you the nurse in charge of this sick and moribund organisation? Not society, nor the state, nor any one; no one has asked you to undertake this; you who fill your position of landowner, merchant, Tsar, priest, or

soldier know very well that you occupy that position by no means with the unselfish aim of maintaining the organisation of life necessary to men's happiness, but simply in your own interests, to satisfy your own covetousness or vanity, or ambition, or indolence, or cowardice. If you did not desire that position you would not be doing your utmost to retain it. Try the experiment of ceasing to commit the cruel, treacherous and base actions that you are constantly committing in order to retain your position, and you will lose it at once. Try the simple experiment, as a government official, of giving up lying, and refusing to take a part in executions and acts of violence; as a priest, of giving up deception; as a soldier, of giving up murder; as landowner or manufacturer, of giving up defending your property by fraud and force, and you will at once lose the position which you pretend is forced upon you, and which seems burdensome to you.

A man cannot be placed against his will in a situation opposed to his conscience.

If you find yourself in such a position it is not because it is necessary to any one whatever, but simply because you wish it. And therefore knowing that your position is repugnant to your heart and your head, and to your faith and even to the science in which you believe, you cannot help reflecting upon

the question whether in retaining it and above all trying to justify it, you are doing what you ought to do.

You might risk making a mistake if you had time to see and retrieve your fault, and if you ran the risk for something of some value. But when you know beyond all doubt that you may disappear any minute, without the least possibility, either for yourself or those you draw after you into your error, of retrieving the mistake; when you know that, whatever you may do in the external organisation of life, it will all disappear as quickly and surely as you will yourself, and will leave no trace behind,—it is clear that you have no reasonable ground for running the risk of such a fearful mistake.

It would be perfectly simple and clear if you did not by your hypocrisy disguise the truth which has so unmistakably been revealed to us.

Share all that you have with others, do not heap up riches, do not steal, do not cause suffering, do not kill, do not unto others what you would not they should do unto you,—all that has been said not 1800, but 5000 years ago, and there could be no doubt of the truth of this law if it were not for hypocrisy. Except for hypocrisy men could not have failed, if not to put the law in practice, at least to recognise it, and admit that it is wrong not to put it in practice.

But you will say that there is the public good to be considered, and that on that account one must not and ought not to conform to these principles ; for the public good one may commit acts of violence and murder. It is better for one man to die than that the whole people perish, you will say, like Caiaphas, and you sign the sentence of death of one man, of a second, and a third ; you load your gun against this man who is to perish for the public good, you imprison him, you take his possessions. You say that you commit these acts of cruelty because you are a part of the society, and of the state ; that it is your duty to serve them, and as landowner, judge, emperor, or soldier to conform to their laws. But besides belonging to the state and having duties created by that position, you belong also to eternity and to God, who also lays duties upon you. And just as your duties to your family and to society are subordinate to your superior duties to the state, in the same way the latter must necessarily be subordinated to the duties dictated to you by the eternal life and by God. And just as it would be senseless to pull up the telegraph posts for fuel for a family or society and thus to increase its welfare at the expense of public interests, in the same way it is senseless to do violence, to execute and to murder, to increase the welfare of the nation, because that

is at the expense of the interests of humanity.

Your duties as a citizen cannot but be subordinated to the superior obligations of the eternal life of God, and cannot be in opposition to them, as Christ's disciples said eighteen centuries ago: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts iv. 19); and "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v. 29).

It is asserted that, in order that the unstable order of things, established in one corner of the world for a few men, may not be destroyed, you ought to commit acts of violence which destroy the eternal and immutable order established by God and by reason. Can that possibly be?

And therefore you cannot but reflect on your position as landowner, manufacturer, judge, emperor, president, minister, priest, and soldier, which is bound up with violence, deception, and murder, and recognise its unlawfulness.

I do not say that if you are a landowner you are bound to give up your lands immediately to the poor; if a capitalist or manufacturer, your money to your workpeople; or that if you are Tsar, minister, official, judge, or general, you are bound to renounce immediately the advantages of your position; or if a soldier, on whom all the system of

violence is based, to refuse immediately to obey in spite of all the dangers of insubordination.

If you do so, you will be doing the best thing possible. But it may happen, and it is most likely, that you will not have the strength to do so. You have relations, a family, subordinates and superiors; you are under an influence so powerful that you cannot shake it off, but you can always recognise the truth and refuse to tell a lie about it. You need not declare that you are remaining a landowner, manufacturer, merchant, artist, or writer, because it is useful to mankind; that you are governor, prosecutor, or Tsar, not because it is agreeable to you, because you are used to it, but for the public good; that you continue to be a soldier, not from fear of punishment but because you consider the army necessary to society. You can always avoid lying in this way to yourself and to others, and you ought to do so; because the one aim of your life ought to be to purify yourself from falsehood and to confess the truth. And you need only do that and your situation will change directly of itself.

There is one thing, and only one thing in which it is granted to you to be free in life, all else being beyond your power—that is, to recognise and profess the truth.

And yet simply from the fact that other

men as misguided and as pitiful creatures as yourself have made you soldier, Tsar, land-owner, capitalist, priest or general, you undertake to commit acts of violence obviously opposed to your reason and your heart, to base your existence on the misfortunes of others, and, above all, instead of filling the one duty of your life—recognising and professing the truth—you feign not to recognise it and disguise it from yourself and others.

And what are the conditions in which you are doing this? You who may die any instant, you sign sentences of death, you declare war, you take part in it; you judge, you punish, you plunder the working people; you live luxuriously in the midst of the poor, and teach weak men who have confidence in you that this must be so, that the duty of men is to do this: and yet it may happen at the moment when you are acting thus that a bacterium or a bull may attack you and you will fall and die, losing for ever the chance of repairing the harm you have done to others, and above all to yourself, in uselessly wasting a life which has been given you only once in eternity, without having accomplished the only thing you ought to have done.

However commonplace and out of date it may seem to us, however confused we may

be by hypocrisy and by the hypnotic suggestion which results from it, nothing can destroy the certainty of this simple and clearly defined truth. No external conditions can guarantee our life, which is attended with inevitable sufferings and infallibly terminated by death, and which consequently can have no significance except in the constant accomplishment of what is demanded by the Power which has placed us in life with a sole certain guide—the rational conscience.

That is why that Power cannot require of us what is irrational and impossible: the organisation of our temporary external life, the life of society or of the state. That Power demands of us only what is reasonable, certain and possible: to serve the Kingdom of God—that is, to contribute to the establishment of the greatest possible union between all living beings—a union possible only in the truth; and to recognise and to profess the revealed truth, which is always in our power.

“But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. vi. 33).

The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity by contributing to the establishment of the Kingdom of God, which can only be done by the recognition and profession of the truth by every man.

“The Kingdom of God cometh not with outward show; neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold the Kingdom of God is within you” (Luke xvii. 20, 21).

THE END

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